Buddhist Meditation In Theory And Practice

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Original Author

Paravahera Vajirañāṇa Mahāthera

New Edition Revised and Edited by

Allan R. Bomhard

CHARLESTON BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP

Advanced Study Series



Buddhist Meditation In Theory and Practice

A General Exposition According to the Pāḷi Canon of the Theravādin School

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In preparing the Charleston Buddhist Fellowship edition of this manual, the original has been thoroughly reworked. New material has been incorporated from various sources, including the *Visuddhimagga* (Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli's translation), the translations from the scriptures given in the original have been compared against more modern translations and have been changed accordingly, the English has been reworded where necessary to improve clarity, new footnotes have been added, and Pāḷi terms have been reviewed and corrected where required. Thus, the current edition is virtually a new work.

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Venerable Paravahera Vajirañāṇa Mahāthera, The Renowned Buddhist Scholar and Educator

The *Buddha Sāsana* has recently lost many distinguished members of the Order of the Blessed One and, indeed, the Venerable Nāyaka Mahāthera belongs to that galaxy of celebrated scholars noted for their erudition and piety who have faithfully preserved the pristine teachings of the *Buddha*. The matchless beauty, intellectual splendor, and the spiritual glory of the *Buddha Sāsana* have been kept aloft by these revered Monks. The Venerable Dr. Paravahera Vajirañāṇa Mahāthera's erudition was not only confined to Buddhist philosophy but extended to the vast fields of Eastern and Western philosophy as well. In fact, he studied Western philosophy at Colombia University in New York City. His deep insight into Western and Buddhist philosophy is clearly borne out in the lecture he delivered on *nirvāṇa* (*nibbāna*) under the auspices of the Dona Alpina Trust at the University of Ceylon (Śri Lanka) in 1941.

His vast learning and ripe scholarship could be gauged from his monumental masterpiece entitled *Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice*. This book, indeed, gives a comprehensive and lucid exposition on Buddhist meditation and has enriched the annals of Buddhist literature. This work was the outcome of three years of research (from 1933 to 1936) at Cambridge University under the supervision of Dr. Edward J. Thomas, then Deputy Librarian of Cambridge University and himself a celebrated Buddhist and Pāḷi scholar. A Doctorate of Philosophy degree was conferred on him by Cambridge University for this outstanding work. Until that time, such a lucid and authoritative book on Theravādin Buddhist meditation in English had not been written.

The learned Thera brought together almost all the most important textual sources of the Buddhist scriptures that have come down to us, arranged them systematically under the appropriate headings, and provided a connecting text that correlates, explains, and annotates them. It has been acknowledged by Buddhist scholars that this is the first time that a work of this scope has been attempted since the days of the great Pāḷi commentators of Theravādin Buddhism, as it aims at nothing less than a comprehensive survey of Buddhist meditation practices.

The learned Thera's mature scholarship and learning was of immense value even to distinguished scholars such as Dr. Edward J. Thomas, Dr. Mrs. Caroline Rhys Davids, Dr. Walter Y. Evans-Wentz, and others. Dr. Edward J. Thomas had sought his advice in the elucidation of Pāḷi terms and words in Buddhist terminology in his book entitled *Buddhist Scriptures*. The Thera assisted the erudite Pāḷi scholar and president of the Pāḷi Text Society, Dr. Mrs. Caroline Rhys Davids, in the compilation of the *Concordance of the Tripiṭaka*. Miss Grace Constant Lounsbery, B.Sc., president of the "Les Amis du Bouddhisme" Society in Paris, had consulted him in the clarification of the intricate and abstruse Buddhist doctrines relating to Buddhist meditation in writing her book entitled *Meditation*. Dr. Walter Y. Evans-Wentz had sought the assistance and advice of the

learned Thera regarding Theravādin aspects of meditation in writing his book entitled *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines*.

The Nāyaka Thera was chosen by Anagārika[1] Dharmapāla and Dr. C. A. Hevavitharana to form the first Buddhist mission to Europe in 1928, as they found in him the attributes of an ideal missionary. The rare qualities of head and heart with which he was endowed enabled him to carry out his *Dhammadūta* work in foreign lands with unfailing enthusiasm and religious zeal. His mission was such a great success that he was invited by various societies in England to deliver lectures and conduct discussions. He was also invited by societies in Paris, Berlin, and New York City to deliver talks on Buddhism. His talk at the Roerich Museum in New York City won the acclaim of the Americans and stimulated their interest in Buddhism.

He was the President of the Mahābodhi Society,[2] Colombo, for twenty-two years from 1938 to 1960 and, during his long term in office as president, worked indefatigably for the upliftment of the *Buddha Sāsana*. He spared no pains in procuring relics of the chief disciples of the *Buddha* for Ceylon (Śri Lanka). Apart from his service to the *Buddha Sāsana*, he rendered yeoman service for the advancement and progress of Buddhist education as the Chief Inspector of Pirivenas[3] from 1937 to 1954 and as a member of the University Senate. His contributions as a member of the Advisory Board of Education and the Archeological Department are also noteworthy.

He acquired a deep understanding regarding the administration and management of the educational and cultural activities of a University while he was at Cambridge University. With the raising of the status of the two chief Pirivenas in Ceylon to the level

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[1] Also spelled *anāgārika*: literally, "homeless one". In its modern sense, the term refers to someone who enters upon a homeless life without, however, formally entering the Buddhist monastic order (*Sangha*). Originally, the term referred to any homeless ascetic. There existed numerous groups of *anagārikas* in India at the time of the *Buddha*, each of which possessed its own doctrinal tradition. One of them was the *Sangha*, the community of Buddhist Monks (*Bhikkhus*), Nuns (*Bhikkhunīs*), and Novices (*Sāmaṇeras*). (In a wider sense, the *Sangha* also includes lay followers.) In modern times, the Śri Lankan Monk Anagārika Dharmapāla (1865—1933) was the first to make use of the term *anagārika* in its modern sense.

[2] Literally, "Society of Great Enlightenment"; a society founded in 1891 by Anagārika Dharmapāla, which contributed decisively to the revival of Buddhism in India. The goal of the Mahābodhi Society was to regain control of Bodh Gayā, to make it once again a center of Buddhism, and to build a university there for Monks from all over the world. At the time the Mahābodhi Society was founded, the Buddhist sacred site of Bodh Gayā was under Hindu control and in a state of decay. In October 1891, the Society convened an international Buddhist conference in order to secure the support of Buddhists of other countries for the Bodh Gayā project. In 1892, the Society began publishing the periodical *The Mahābodhi Society and the United Buddhist World*, which became the essential instrument for diffusion of its concerns among Indian intellectuals and English people residing in India. Due to resistance on the part of the British authorities and the Hindus, a long legal proceeding had to be undertaken, which only reached a conclusion in 1949 with the attainment of Indian independence. From that point on, Buddhists and Hindus assumed joint responsibility for the maintenance of the sacred sites at Bodh Gayā. At the present time, the Mahābodhi Society maintains schools, hospitals, and other social institutions, has centers throughout the world, and has undertaken the translation and publication of Pāḷi texts.

[3] "Pirivena" is a monastic college (similar to a seminary) for the education of Buddhist Monks in Śri Lanka. These were the centers of secondary and higher education for lay people as well in ancient times. Today, 561 Pirivenas are founded and maintained by the Śri Lankan Ministry of Education. Young Monks undergo training at these Pirivenas prior to their ordination.

of Universities, in 1959, the learned Thera was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Vidyodaya University,[4] which post he held until he was appointed Vice Chancellor. Upon retirement, he functioned as Vice Chancellor Emeritus until his death. During the *Buddha Jayantī* year (1956—1957), he was appointed Editor-in-Chief of the Tripiṭaka Translation Board conducted by the Ceylonese government to scrutinize and edit the Pāḷi Canon. At the time of his death, the learned Thera had edited twelve volumes out of forty. This work is of outstanding merit, which will go a long way in preserving the *Dhamma* in its pristine purity.

I had the privilege of being associated with the Venerable Thera for many years. In my search for a satisfactory solution to some of the deeper and profound doctrinal tenets of Theravādin Buddhism, I verily found him a fountain of knowledge, where I was able to drink deep and satisfy my thirst. One was but amazed and astounded by his erudition, penetrative insight, and prodigious memory. Even at the ripe old age of seventy-five, he could quote chapter and verse from the Buddhist scriptures with great ease and facility in answering questions. When he was not quite sure of how to answer, he would say that he would refer to the texts and get back to me. Such, indeed, was the humility of this great scholar.

The Venerable Thera has, indeed, worked selflessly and with religious devotion for the advancement and upliftment of education and culture in Ceylon (Śri Lanka) for the past forty-six years, and, above all, he has made a priceless and unique contribution to the *Buddha Sāsana* as a scholar, translator, writer, teacher, and missionary. Those who knew him well will remember him most for his humanity. His was not the cold way of the anemic academician. He, indeed, lived his Buddhism with every beat of his warm, generous heart. He was generous with his advice, with his time, and, above all, with himself for the sake of suffering humanity. One need not feel sorrow at his passing. His path was the path of the *Buddha* and the *Arahats* — those great and mighty ones. He lived here a while and has now gone on, strong and assured, brave and smiling, kind, gentle, untiring until his final task was done, with the attainment of *nibbāna*. ■

Alec Robertson

[4] Vidyodaya University emerged in 1958 from the Vidyodaya Pirivena, a distinguished Buddhist center of learning. Vidyodya Pirivena was founded due to the efforts of Sangharaja Śri Saranankara, who died in 1778 during the Dutch period. The land at Maligakanda (a suburb of Colombo) and funds for its foundation were given by the philanthropist Andiris Perera Dharmagunawardhana. In 1873, the Venerable Mohottiwatte Gunananda was also a great force in the emergence of the Pirivena. His aim was to train educated orator Monks in order to save Buddhism, and, with that goal in mind, he made logic compulsory in Pirivena education. The Pirivena taught Buddhist studies as well as pseudo-sciences like Astrology, widely accepted and held in high esteem in traditional society at the time. However, the transition from Pirivena to University gradually converted it to a secular center of learning. The University was moved to Gangodawila, some 10 miles southeast in 1961. In 1978, the name of the University was changed to University of Śri Jayewardenepura.

Preface

The present work is the result of an inquiry into the theory and practice, the benefits and attainments, and the final goal of the system of meditation, as it is found in the Pāḷi Canon of the Theravādin School of Buddhism.

Meditation, as it is viewed here, is not a negative deliverance from life, but a positive, dynamic force that raises man from his ordinary position to that of the divine; it is the means by which he emerges from the darkness of ignorance and develops wisdom to the point of perfect enlightenment, the ultimate aim and pursuit of man. In all times and all places, it is the only means to the attainment of final deliverance, the eternal happiness taught by the Buddha as *nibbāna*.

The chief authority for this thesis is supplied by the Pāḷi texts themselves. In the plan of this book, I have endeavored to present the subject matter in a sequence that leads from fundamental principles as found in the Pāḷi Canon and Commentaries up to the final goal of the meditational practices. The scheme is, in general, set forth with reference to the classic work of exegesis, the *Visuddhimagga* by Buddhaghosa Thera. Treatment of this kind being a complicated task involving a certain amount of rearrangement of the individual subjects, it is possible that some errors may have crept into this book, but every effort has been made to eliminate such defects.

The overlapping of various subjects has made unavoidable certain repetitions, but, far from being a hindrance, the reader should find that these serve the purpose of clarifying obscure and difficult points by approaching them from different angles, so that what may be only partially comprehensible when seen in one aspect, may be fully understood when viewed from another position. All Buddhist meditational practices revolve around the fundamental tenets of Buddhist philosophy, and they touch upon one another at so many points that the absolute necessity of referring back occasionally to subjects that had already been dealt with in another context became apparent as the work progressed.

The work is the result of three years of research at Cambridge University (1933—1936) under the supervision of Dr. Edward J. Thomas, then Deputy Librarian of the Cambridge University Library, whose kindness to me throughout that period I shall always remember with gratitude. Among others who helped to make my research period at Cambridge possible, I would like to mention Mr. B. L. Broughton, M. A. (Oxford); Mr. A. G. Grant and Mrs. E. Grant and their son Alan Grant; and Mr. Francis J. Payne and Miss Grace Constant Lounsbery, President of "Les Amis du Bouddhisme", Paris.

At the time, I also had the advantage of being able to discuss the subject of my thesis with Dr. W. Stede, Professor of Pāḷi, London University. I also received much help and encouragement from Dr. Walter Y[eeling] Evans-Wentz, Jesus College, Oxford University.

Last, but by no means least, I wish to express my thanks to Mr. Francis Story, the Anagārika Sugatānanda, who has helped to see the book through the press and has written an Introduction explaining the psychological importance of the subject in light of his profound understanding of the *Buddha's* Doctrine.

It is my sincere hope that the work will not be found altogether unworthy of the good friends and helpers I have named, as well as a number of others, including the publishers and printers, who, in their several ways, contributed towards its production. May they all attain the happiness of *nibbāna*. ■

Paravahera Vajirañāṇa
Colombo, August 1961

Introduction

A great deal has been written about the yogic systems of self-development taught in Hinduism, and the Western world has learned something of their nature and of their value as a means of utilizing powers latent in the mind for certain specific ends. Less, however, is known about the system of meditation practiced by Buddhists, despite the fact that this particular form of mental culture has been one of the most decisive factors in monitoring Asian religious life during the past two thousand years.

One reason for the lack of precise knowledge on this important subject is the difficulty of gaining access to authentic sources of information. Meditation, or *bhāvanā*, is an integral part of Buddhist religious doctrine and practice and does not form a separate study as do some yogic systems in Hindu tradition. The references to theory and practice in *bhāvanā* are scattered throughout the Buddhist canonical texts and commentaries, which form a vast corpus of literature in Pāḷi and Sanskrit. Only a relatively small portion of this has been translated into other languages, so that, until quite recently, accurate information has been available only to those who are able to study the original texts. Furthermore, it is necessary for the would-be practitioner to be acquainted with the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism before he can grasp the purpose of the meditational exercises, and he has to master certain technical terms which, in the absence of any exact equivalents in other languages, often have to remain untranslated. The Buddhist conception of mental activities and the nature of consciousness, as it is found in the *Abhidhamma*, are, in several respects, radically different from the popular notions held in the West concerning the soul. In Buddhism, we are not dealing with a psychological entity but with a flux of mental processes, and the terms of reference that are employed have no counterparts in Western thought. The translator is therefore faced with the necessity of forging a special vocabulary as he proceeds or, alternatively, using Pāḷi or Sanskrit terms when the resources of other languages fail him. Neither alternative is entirely satisfactory in itself; its success must depend upon the ability of the would-be practitioner to adapt himself to an unfamiliar climate of thought.

The word "*Abhidhamma*" (literally, "higher doctrine") itself denotes a system that is neither philosophy nor metaphysics as these are understood in the West. The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* is that part of the Buddhist Canon that deals with the higher aspects of mental states and processes. The *Abhidhamma* contains a systematized analysis of the variable states of consciousness, not only in relation to the external world, but also to the absolute essence of being that is expressed in terms of ethical law. It is metaphysics to the extent that it derives from subliminal insights, but it has no dependence upon any supernatural ground of being; the assertions it makes are open to investigation within the framework of human experience. At the same time, it bears no similarity to Western speculative philosophy. A comparison may perhaps be made between *Abhidhamma* and the modern approach to psychology as a science, but, here again, two important

differences are to be noted. One is that *Abhidhamma* replaces hypothesis by the certainty of direct knowledge, the other that it gives an ethical basis to human consciousness, both in its active and passive aspects.

In order to convey the real meaning of *Abhidhamma*, therefore, it would be necessary to substitute the term “ethico-psychology” for the more literal translation “higher doctrine”. But, in accepting such a substitution, it would still have to be borne in mind that *Abhidhamma* is founded upon a universal principle that extends beyond the limitations of human psychology, namely, the principle of “dependent origination” (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), so that, in sacrificing the term “higher doctrine”, something has been lost to the concept. An understanding of the law of dependent origination is, itself, a prerequisite for the would-be practitioner who wants to grasp the psychological principles of Buddhist meditation.

The most exhaustive treatise on the subject of meditation is the *Visuddhimagga*[5] by Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, composed around 412 CE in Ceylon (Śri Lanka). This is the standard Theravādin work of exposition, its authority resting upon the original teachings of Gotama Buddha, as they are found in the Pāḷi *Tipiṭaka*. For the Western reader, there are two formidable obstacles to the study of Buddhaghosa’s great work. The first is the manner of presentation, which is traditional and not well adapted to the modern outlook; the second is the difficulty, in the absence of source-references, in distinguishing between what is the actual teaching of the *Buddha* and what is the interpretation, or exegesis, of later writers, including Buddhaghosa himself. In any translation of Buddhaghosa’s work, there are also bound to be differences of opinion regarding the terminology adopted by the translator. The *Visuddhimagga* is a commentarial work, which, today, calls for a commentary of its own. Nevertheless, it continues to be the most authoritative single work on this complex subject, outside of the canonical texts themselves.

Another cause of the comparative neglect of the Buddhist systems of meditation by Western writers may lie in the fact that the Buddhist, unlike the Hindu, systems are directed entirely and exclusively at mental purification and liberation. The Buddha did not teach *bhāvanā* for the purpose of gaining supernormal powers, the ability to perform prodigious physical feats to obtain mastery over the external world. He taught with but one objective in mind — the extinction (*nirodha*) of suffering (*dukkha*) and release from conditioned existence (*saṁsāra*). It is here that we come upon the chief difference between the Buddhist concentration techniques and those most commonly associated with Hindu *yoga*. The latter, particularly the *haṭhayoga* and *rājayoga*, are concerned with results, which from the Buddhist standpoint, are negligible. Being of the mundane order (*lokiya*), they do not lead to final liberation (*vimokkha*) from that suffering which is inseparable from personalized existence. On the contrary, they increase the bondage and add more fuel to the fires of craving (*taṇhā*).

The original objective of the Hindu systems was that of gaining power over the forces of nature, personified as the gods of the *Vedas*. This was to be accomplished

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[5] An excellent translation of the *Visuddhimagga* is available: Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (translator), *The Path of Purification* (Seattle, WA: BPS Pariyatti Editions [1999]).

through asceticism (*tapa* or *tapo*), by which the *yogi* was deemed to strengthen his virtue — that is, his will — to a point at which it made him superior to the gods themselves. The Rishi's[6] ability to embarrass the gods is a common theme in Purāṇic and epic literature. It was not until the *Saṁkhyā* system came into prominence that *mokṣa*, that is, liberation or union with the Absolute, came to be the principal aim of *yoga*. Kapila, the founder of the *Saṁkhyā* system, lived about a century before the *Buddha*, in the same region of India, and it was probably his discipline that was followed by the ascetics whom Prince Siddhattha joined before His enlightenment. But the goal of liberation in Hindu *yoga* never entirely shook off its more worldly features. It is, perhaps, these features that have made Hindu *yoga* attractive to Westerners, who wish to live more efficiently, develop their latent powers of mind and body, and generally work upon the external world in much the same way, in its own field, that scientific technologies enable them to do so.

It is true that certain psychic faculties capable of a worldly application, such as *dibba-cakkhu* (clairvoyance), *dibba-sota* (clairaudience), *mano-maya-kāya* (projection of the "astral body"), and other paranormal powers are developed in the course of Buddhist meditation. They arise incidentally out of the jhānic states as the meditator traverses the path towards a higher realization. The *Buddha* and the *Arahats* possessed such powers and, when need arose, they exercised them for the sake of the ignorant who demanded "signs and wonders". But, in general, the *Buddha* deplored their use, preferring to spread the *Dhamma* by the "miracle of teaching" and the self-propagating power of truth. To those not yet fully emancipated from worldly delusion, they can become attachment-forming impediments, and, as such, they have to be guarded against and overcome in the struggle for *nibbāna*. In the Buddhist view, one who embarks on concentration exercises in order to obtain supernormal powers (*abhiññā*) is doing so with the wrong intention and at great danger to himself. If all power corrupts, then supernormal power can corrupt superlatively.

What then is the right attitude of mind for one who undertakes Buddhist *bhāvanā*? To answer this, it is necessary to give some idea of the ultimate purpose of the Buddhist practices. The Noble Eightfold Path, which summarizes the Buddhist way of life, begins with *sammā-diṭṭhi*, or right view. This points to the fact that the disciple must have, at the very beginning, a clear conception of the transitoriness, suffering nature, and egoless nature or essencelessness of all conditioned existence, as made clear in the following verses from the *Dhammapada*:

277. All compound things are impermanent; those who realize this through insight-wisdom[7] are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to purity.[8]

278. All compound things have suffering as their nature; those who realize this through insight-wisdom are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to purity.

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[6] Sanskrit *ṙṣi-*, a holy sage of advanced spiritual attainment.
[7] *Paññā* is translated here as "insight-wisdom" (*vipassanā paññā*).
[8] That is, to the purification of the mind.

279. All states are without self;[9] those who realize this through insight-wisdom are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to purity.

At first, his understanding of this is simply on the intellectual level; he sees that all things, mind and body included, are subject to change, and that their arising, decay, and dissolution involve suffering. And since this is so, it follows that there is no abiding core of self-essence in them, for that which is a thing-in-itself could not be the subject of an incessant flux. The phenomenal personality, which we mean when we speak of the "self", is a flow of mental processes, causally conditioned, and the "character" is nothing more than a particular set of tendencies that give it direction. If there were an immutable soul or self or *ātman* in the Upanishadic sense, it could have no possible connection with the mutable and evanescent personality, and all attempts to identify them or even relate them to one another would be futile. A "soul" that changes could not be a self-existing entity, while one that did not change could not be made one with the fluid human personality.

It appears that St. Augustine (354—430 CE) (*Confessions*, Book XII) saw this difficulty more clearly than the Vedāntic philosophers. But, to philosophers since David Hume (1711—1776 CE), and particularly those who have assimilated the concepts of physics and dynamic psychology, the predicament of how an unchangeable soul could exist in view of the changeableness of changeable things is not as troubling as it was for St. Augustine. The need for static entities is fast disappearing from every realm of inquiry, and we are left with processes alone. To the question, "What is it that changes?" the only answer is: "There is no 'thing' that changes; it is the process itself that is manifest." We may speak of the matter of the universe, but, in doing so, we are dealing with a convention; what we really mean is the transforming energy, the balance of forces, that make up the physical world. Exactly the same principles apply in the psychological realm.

It is a realization of this kind, however imperfect, that constitutes the first stage of entering the Noble Eightfold Path. From it springs the next requisite, right intention, or right thought (*sammā-saṁkappa*). This means the determination to liberate oneself from the fetters of desire that bind all beings to the wheel of rebirth (*saṁsāra*).

Since there is no persisting entity to be found in the life-process, and, therefore, no ego-principle, it is to be understood as *anattā* — devoid of selfhood. This voidness of selfhood, which forms the distinguishing feature of the Buddhist analysis of being, is a view that is fully in accord with the conclusions drawn by modern scientific thinkers, who have arrived at it independently. Throughout nature, we find processes taking place,

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[9] Impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and soullessness (*anattā*) are the three characteristics of all things conditioned by causes (*saṁkhārā*). It is by contemplating these three characteristics that one realizes *nibbāna*. A meditator may concentrate on any characteristic that appeals to him or her most.

Anattā, that is, soullessness, selflessness, or essencelessness, is the crux of Buddhism. The term *saṁkhāra* "compound," which is applied to any conditioned thing, is used in the two previous verses (nos. 277 and 278), while, in the third verse (no. 279), the term *dhamma* is used in order to show that everything, including the unconditioned *nibbāna*, is without self existence. *Nibbāna* is not included in *saṁkhāra*. It is neither transitory nor sorrowful. *Dhamma* embraces both the conditioned and the unconditioned. *Nibbāna* is, and it is essenceless.

but nothing substantial or enduring to which the processes apply. All phenomena exist only in a relative sense. Seeing that, we realize that a thing-in-itself, apart from related conditions, cannot exist. At any given moment, what we call the "self" is only the end-product of prior causal relations extending back into the infinite past.

This is the basis of the *Abhidhamma* philosophy as it concerns consciousness (*citta*). The "self" that is imaginatively constructed consists of a series of instantaneous awarenesses, each being a point-moment (*cittakkhaṇa*) of consciousness that is focused upon whatever happens to be engaging the attention at the time. Thus, from moment to moment, we are aware of a multitude of impressions both from the external world and the world of mental activity, but we cannot be aware of more than one impression at the same moment. We may think that we see an object, hear a sound, and feel a touch simultaneously, but this is an illusion brought about by the extreme rapidity with which the point-moments follow upon one another. They impinge upon our fields of sensory perception, and our attention is directed towards them successively or alternatively. There is a turning from one to another, but so rapid is the process that we gather a general impression that we see, hear, and feel at the same time and that there is an uninterrupted continuity in the consciousness.

But that which appears to be an entity, the sum total of thoughts, sensations, opinions, desires, memories, and so on that is commonly denoted by the word "soul" is actually nothing but the process of *bhava*, or "becoming". It is this process that connects one moment of consciousness to that which follows it, each being dependent upon prior conditioning factors, mental and physical, and upon external and internal stimuli. The external stimuli are the sense-impressions and data received through the five physical organs of sense; the internal are those that arise in the mind from the recollection of former sensations or the anticipation of future ones. So we tend to identify the "self" with the locale of our conscious experience, the body, or else with the complex of psychophysical activities, such as thinking, willing, remembering and their concomitants. Nevertheless, these phenomena, being all conditioned and impermanent, are states of coming-to-be rather than of true being. Just as in the realm of physics, solid substance resolves itself into nuclear activity or force, so, in the realm of psychological activity, the supposed "self" that thinks is resolved into a process — thinking. In both cases, what we are really dealing with is not a complex of things but a series of events.

Why does Buddhism, contrary to all other religions, place such a strong emphasis on the non-reality of the "self"? The answer is because the idea of individualized selfhood — that there is a real "I" that enjoys experience — is the cause of craving that leads to continued existence. It produces *bhava-taṇhā*, or craving for (eternal) existence. Its by-products are greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), the three fires of suffering (*dukkha*). In the great Fire Sermon,[10] the *Buddha* declared that "all things are on fire", burning with the flames of passion, ill-will, and infatuation. In order to extinguish these flames forever, it is first necessary to cast off the delusion of selfhood. It is this delusion that stands first in the list of ten fetters (*saṁyojana*) as *sakkāya-diṭṭhi*.

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[10] *Vinaya Piṭaka*, Khandhaka, Mahāvagga, 1:21; *Saṁyutta Nikāya*, 35. Connected Discourses on the Six Sense Bases (*Saḷāyatanasaṁyutta*), Division I. The Root Fifty, III. The All, Burning, no. 35:28.

In this difficult task of abolishing ego-illusion, the first move, just as in the case of ridding oneself of *avijjā*, is to acknowledge intellectually that there is no permanent "I" in phenomenal personality. The full realization of this truth, which completely alters the psychological orientation, only comes with the attainment of *Arahatta-phala*, the fruit of sainthood. It is then coincidental with the dying out of the last traces of ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving (*taṇhā*).

The ultimate purpose of Buddhist meditation, then, is to transform the intellectual acknowledgment of these facts into the direct personal experience of them. It is at that stage that the mere philosopher, who so often fails to get sustenance from his philosophy or to apply it consistently to his own needs, becomes transformed into the seer who knows the truth by inner experience, and, thenceforth, cannot do other than live in accordance with it. When the *Buddha* said, "He who sees Me sees the *Dhamma*, and he who sees the *Dhamma* sees Me", He was stating a literal fact. The Ascetic Gotama, as a limited phenomenal personality, had become identified with His Buddhahood. He had become one with the Truth. He taught, and the teacher and the teaching were one.

As one example of the means by which this is achieved, we may turn to the *catu-satipaṭṭhāna*, or the "four foundations of mindfulness". Here, the disciple practices dissociation from and non-involvement with the factors that are mistakenly regarded as the "self"; that is to say, the body (*kāya*), the sensations, or feelings (*vedanā*), the state of the mind (*citta*), and the mental objects, or contents of the mind (*dhamma*). By fixing his bare attention (*yoniso-manasikāra*) on them, without any intellectual or emotional reactions to what he perceives, he trains himself to take a completely depersonalized attitude towards these phenomena.

In "mindfulness of the body" (*kāyānupassanā*), he views his own physical form (*kāya*) as an aggregate (*khandha*) of impersonal elements, held together by natural laws and functioning in response to the dynamics of the physical world. The material substance of the body is in no sense different from that of the external world. Seeing it thus, with its imperfections and weaknesses, its proneness to suffering through decay and dissolution, he becomes detached from the body and no longer considers it the "self" or even any part of a self.

Contemplating his sensations (*vedanā*) in the same way, he comes to realize that these sensations are transitory, beyond his immediate control, and the result of causes that have determined their nature independently of his will; and so, he sees that the sensations also are not the "self".

When he contemplates the mind (*citta*) with the same detachment, he sees merely a flow of mental states that he is able to recognize as being wholesome or unwholesome, and he becomes aware of various states of consciousness whose emotional content he is able to evaluate as being desirous or free from desire, angry or free from anger, unenlightened or enlightened, torpid or distracted, with *jhāna*, or without *jhāna*, on the sensory plane or above it, concentrated or unconcentrated, released or bound. By means of this depersonalized psychological analysis, he attains to knowledge of the nature of mental operations and ceases to be in servitude to them. The self-knowledge that he thus gains frees him from delusions concerning his own emotional reactions and personality traits. At the same time, it reveals clearly the *anattā*, that is, the soulless, selfless, or

essenceless characteristic of these passing phases of the mind. They are seen as "empty phenomena", mental events without any underlying stratum of permanence or selfhood.

Contemplating mental objects (*dhamma*), that is, ideas, thoughts, images, etc. — the contents of the mind —, he carries the analysis still further and perceives clearly what mental impurities are present at any given moment, how they originate, how they may be overcome, and how they may be prevented from arising in the future. He discerns the true nature of the five personality-factors (*pañcakkhandha*), their origination, support, and dissolution, and, in that light, he scrutinizes the six doors of sensory perception and the six fields of sense-cognition (*āyatana*) to which they open. In this way, he becomes able to define the various forms of craving and attachment that stem from them and learns how they may be overcome and prevented from arising in the future. He then becomes capable of distinguishing between the illusory and the real. He can say precisely which of the seven factors of enlightenment[11] are present in him and which are yet to be cultivated, and he grasps the essence of the Four Noble Truths. The way to liberation is then open to him through the unfettered exercise of his supramundane insight.

Existence, as we experience it, is a never-ending cycle of manifestations brought into being by mental energy; these manifestations take the form of sentient beings. This "rebirth" (a term which has to be used for want of a better, and which is preferable to "reincarnation" or "transmigration") is brought about in any one of thirty-one planes of conditioned being, each plane having innumerable subdivisions, and it is nothing more than a causal continuum of actions and results. Every volitional action (*kamma*) — that is, every action that is prompted by desire for a result and consciously directed towards that result — projects a force that causes some modification and reaction in the world of phenomena. According to whether these results (*vipāka*) are pleasant or unpleasant to ourselves, we classify them as good, bad, or neutral. Behind all action is the primary urge of desire, and it is this desire, or force of craving (*taṇhā*), that may be said to be the single reality — certainly the sole creator — in the phenomenal world. Living beings are the embodiment of self-created desire, and their cosmic history is without beginning. Moral law prevails in the universe, but it is a purely impersonal law, as necessary to the condition of animate things as the law of gravity is to the inanimate. Man reaps the results of causes he has put in motion in the past. His sense of ethical values is derived from the knowledge, clear in some, obscure in others, but present to some degree in nearly all human beings, that there is, in actual fact, a retributive and compensatory law at work in nature. The theist attributes this to God; but the Buddhist, seeing no evidence for the existence of a creator God in a universe that is indifferent to suffering,[12] seeks no further than the natural law of cause and effect.

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[11] The seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*) are: (1) mindfulness; (2) investigation of the Truth (*Dhamma-vicaya*, that is, "seeking knowledge", specifically, knowledge of the Four Noble Truths); (3) energy; (4) joy; (5) relaxation; (6) concentration; and (7) equanimity.

[12] In this context, see *God's Problem: How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most Important Question — Why We Suffer* (New York, NY: HarperOne [2008]) by Bart D. Ehrman. In this book, Ehrman challenges the contradictory biblical explanations for why an all-powerful God allows us to suffer. Ehrman's inability to reconcile the claims of faith with the facts of real life led this former pastor to reject Christianity.

Rebirth, with all its consequent ills, is brought about by the conjunction of two psychological factors: (1) craving (*taṇhā*) and (2) ignorance (*avijjā*). The craving is for sensory or intellectual experience, by which beings feel themselves to exist as separate entities. The ignorance is that primordial *not-knowing* that obscures the ultimate truth. These, together, form the vital urge, the will to live, by which sentient beings of every class and conformation come into existence. Such life-affirmation is inseparably linked with volitional action, or *kamma*, and it is this *kamma*, the volitional energy generated by thought, speech, and physical action throughout one lifetime, that produces, as its result, another being after death. In that being, the *kamma*-potential of the previous aggregation of activities comes to fruition, and the serial continuity is carried on by further volitional activities. But in this phenomenal personality, which consists of four mental factors — sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), (predisposing) mental formations (*saṁkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) — linked to one material factor (*rūpa*), the body, there is no transference of identity from one moment to another. The stream of self-awareness that the uninstructed conceive to be a soul is made up of point-moments of consciousness (*cittakkhaṇa*), each of which has no more than a momentary duration. But, because each of them is causally related to those that precede and follow it, the thought moment may be said to inherit tendencies from its predecessors and, in turn, transmit tendencies to its successors. It is this continuity (*santati*) that imparts character to the individualized stream of consciousness, since character is nothing more than a predisposition to think, speak, and act in certain ways that have become habitual. So, we see that what is conventionally called the rebirth of an individual is, like the series of momentary births and deaths of the point-moments of consciousness, simply a carrying forward of tendencies that have been set up in the past. These determine the type and quality of the new psychophysical aggregate when it comes into being. In the case of human personality, the further development can then be modified by successive acts of will.

As Western psychologists are fully aware, acts of will can spring from the conscious mind or from hidden layers of the unconscious, and so, to varying degrees, they are motivated by emotion or intellect. Man is driven this way and that by conflicting or alternating urges. The purpose of Western psychiatry is to reveal the hidden content of one's personality and to integrate it, if possible; but an integration of this kind, even if it is successful, is only a reconciliation of the inner and outer aspects. From the Buddhist point of view, it is no more than the substitution of one set of illusions for another, on the assumption that the substituted illusions are more desirable than those that have been replaced. They may, in fact, be better, if the goal is merely to make the individual fit into his environment more comfortably or more effectively. But, if the goal is to understand the nature of the mind itself, and to bring its highest fulfillment within reach, a technique is called for that takes into account more factors than the Western psychiatrist is willing to concede. Without this, one may be a success in terms of society, yet be a complete failure as a progressing, evolving personality.

One objective of Buddhist meditation is to make the individual fully aware of his position in the cosmos, the causes that have placed him where he is, and the ultimate goal towards which he ought to strive. Only when this is accomplished can he really be called the master of his own destiny. For this reason, if for no other, the present work should

claim the attention of thoughtful people in the East and West alike. At a time when the prevailing mood is one of uncertainty and tension, it is more than ever necessary that man should make an earnest endeavor to grasp the meaning of life, and this he can do only in one way — by understanding his own inner being. The answer to the urgent problems that confront us today is not to be found in the external world or in the conditions that have grown up about us, for these things are, in the last analysis, simply projections of our interior states. The world is as man has made it. If it is to be altered, it must be altered from within, at the very seat of its origin, the mind. That is the truth that all Eastern philosophical systems teach, and, in Buddhism, it has reached its most perfect development, for there is to be found a rational and systematic method of developing the higher faculties that are latent in every human being. It is a system that has been handed down through the ages, first, orally and, later, in writing, by those who have themselves practiced it from the time when it was first taught by Gotama Buddha, and whose lives, like that of the Master, have attested to its truth and efficacy.

In making this compilation, Venerable Dr. Paravahera Vajirañāṇa Mahāthera has brought together all the most important of the textual sources from the Pāḷi Canon and Commentaries that have come down to us, arranged them systematically under their appropriate headings, and provided a connecting text that correlates, explains, and annotates them. It is the first time that a work of this kind has been attempted since the days of the great Pāḷi commentators of the Theravādin School, since it aims at nothing less than a complete survey of the Buddhist meditational practices by one who is eminently qualified to expound them. Speaking for myself, I feel it a great privilege to have been entrusted with the task of assisting in the production of the work. My part has been small, but, while helping to prepare it for publication, I have increased, to a considerable extent, my own knowledge of the texts and their practical application, for which I am profoundly indebted to the author, my teacher. In the long discussions we have held on points of terminology and on the best way to explain certain very abstruse teachings connected with Buddhist meditation (*bhāvanā*), I have learned to respect not only his deep erudition, painstaking scholarship, and conscientious sincerity, but something more valuable even than these — his penetrating insight into the ultimate realities that lie behind the words of the teaching.

Sabba dānaṁ Dhamma dānaṁ jināti — "The gift of the *Dhamma* surpasses all other gifts." In giving this book to the world, Venerable Dr. Paravahera Vajirañāṇa Mahāthera has performed a deed of the highest merit. My wish is that it may serve not only as a source of reference to scholars — for which, apart from everything else, it is certain to prove of the utmost value — but also as a means of introducing the methods of Buddhist meditation to many who are searching for spiritual guidance in this troubled age. They, too, will be under a debt of gratitude to its author and, like myself, will honor him as their teacher. May he, by virtue of his merit, reach the supreme goal of *bhāvanā* — the cessation of all suffering, *nibbāna*. ■

Francis Story
The Anagārika Sugatānanda

PART ONE

Introduction, Definition of Terms, and Preliminary Considerations

1

Introductory Theory Of Buddhist Meditation

The importance of meditation as a means of mental purification is emphasized by several great religions. It is found especially in Indian religions, including Buddhism, as an essential feature of religious expression. "*Yoga*", the "yoking", or "joining", of the mind to the Ultimate, is the usual technical term applied to it. But, in the early teachings of Buddhism, this term is never found in this sense, though it was used in later Buddhist works. It is in the *Saṁkhyā*[13] system that the term is especially used, and this is the chief school that developed the practice known as "*yoga*". This school is earlier than the teachings of the *Buddha*, but there is no ground for thinking that Buddhist meditational

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[13] One of the six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy. *Saṁkhyā* adopts a consistent dualism of the orders of matter (*prakṛti*) and soul, or self (*puruṣa*). The two were originally separate, but, in the course of evolution, *puruṣa* mistakenly identifies itself with aspects of *prakṛti*. Right knowledge consists of the ability of *puruṣa* to distinguish itself from *prakṛti*. Although many references to the system are given in earlier texts, *Saṁkhyā* received its classical form and expression in the *Saṁkhyā-kārikā*s ("Stanzas of *Saṁkhyā*") by Īśvarakṛṣṇa (ca. 3rd century CE). Vijñānabhikṣu wrote an important treatise on the system in the 16th century CE. In the *Saṁkhyā* system, there is belief in an infinite number of similar but separate *puruṣas* ("selves"), no one superior or inferior to the other. *Puruṣa* and *prakṛti* being sufficient to explain the universe, the existence of a god is not hypothesized. The *puruṣa* is ubiquitous, all-conscious, all-pervasive, motionless, unchangeable, immaterial, and without desire. *Prakṛti* is the universal and subtle (that is, unmanifest) matter, or nature, and, as such, is determined only by time and space. The chain of evolution begins when *puruṣa* impinges on *prakṛti*, much as a magnet draws iron shavings unto itself. The *puruṣa*, which, before, was pure consciousness without an object, becomes focused on *prakṛti*, and out of this is evolved *mahat* ("great one") or *buddhi* ("spiritual awareness"). Next to evolve is the individualized ego consciousness (*ahaṁkāra*, "I-maker"), which imposes upon the *puruṣa* the misapprehension that the ego is the basis of the *puruṣa's* objective existence. The *ahaṁkāra* further divides into the five gross elements (space, air, fire, water, earth), the five fine elements (sound, touch, sight, taste, smell), the five organs of perception (with which to hear, touch, see, taste, smell), the five organs of activity (with which to speak, grasp, move, procreate, evacuate), and mind, or thought (*manas*). The universe is the result of the combinations and permutations of these various principles, to which the *puruṣa* is added. Largely outside the above system stands that of the three primal qualities of matter that are called *guṇas* ("qualities"). They make up the *prakṛti* but are further important principally as psychophysical factors. The highest one is *sattva*, which is illumination, enlightening knowledge, and lightness; the second is *rajas*, which is energy, passion, and expansiveness; the third is *tamas* ("darkness"), which is obscurity, ignorance, and inertia. To these correspond moral models: to *tamas*, that of the ignorant and lazy man; to *rajas*, that of the impulsive and passionate man; to *sattva*, that of the enlightened and serene man.

practices were borrowed from the *Saṁkhyā* system. There may have been contact between the two schools, but the resemblances that exist do not affect the question of the independent origin of the Buddhist system.

The Buddhist scriptures themselves tell us that there were other schools that practiced meditation. The Ariyapariyesana Sutta (The Nobel Quest) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 26) states that the two ascetics Aḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta practiced high forms of meditation (according to *yoga*), and the stages that they respectively attained correspond to the third and fourth stages of *arūpajjhāna* ("immaterial absorption") in the Buddhist system. But the *Bodhisatta* who practiced these *jhānas* under those teachers before His enlightenment rejected them, inasmuch as the goal they achieved was not *nibbāna*, the ultimate release that He was seeking.

In the course of a dialog with the Jain follower Saccaka, the *Buddha* discusses a method of physical and mental training (*kāyabhāvanā* and *cittabhāvanā*, respectively) practiced by earlier ascetics, and, thereafter, He describes the application of the terms and the manner in which He discovered the method by which He attained enlightenment.

Records such as these indicate that early Buddhism recognized the existence of other schools that practiced meditation; but nothing of historical value is known about these systems. A notable exception is, however, found in the Jains, who are frequently mentioned in the Buddhist scriptures under the name *Titthiyas*,[14] or "heretics". There are several other references in the scriptures that show that the pursuit of meditational practices had been prevalent in India from time immemorial. At the same time, there is no reason to believe that any of the actual modes of practice in the Buddhist methods were borrowed from elsewhere. Thus, Buddhist meditation may justly be granted an independent study.

As it is expounded in the Pāḷi Canon, Buddhist meditation is based primarily upon the experience of the *Buddha* Himself and upon the method adopted by Him in the attainment of enlightenment. Meditation has, therefore, come to occupy the central position in Buddhist teaching, and it is to be regarded as the essential factor in religious culture. Its practice has been developed into two complex systems known as *samatha* and *vipassanā*. An examination of the whole subject, considering its fundamental principles, reveals it as a process of developing a higher from of consciousness (*citta*) as the only means of attaining the goal of *nibbāna*.

The Buddhist theory of meditation aims at the practice of right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*), the culmination of the Noble Eightfold Path, which is expounded in the *Buddha's* very first discourse, the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, the "Turning of the Wheel of the *Dhamma*" (*Saṁyutta Nikāya*, Mahāvagga, Sacca Saṁyutta). The Noble Eightfold Path, being the method of self-enlightenment that is the goal of Buddhist practice, is called *majjhimā paṭipadā*, the "middle path". It is so called because it tends to moderation, avoiding the two extremes: on the one hand, of indulgence in sensory pleasures, and, on the other, of adherence to the practices of self-mortification.

[14] In Buddhist Sanskrit, *tīrthika* — an adherent of another sect, a "heretic".

Hence, the practice of this method is a medium between these two extremes, avoiding all excess. Excess in either direction must be avoided, inasmuch as it is dangerous. Buddhist meditation, therefore, cannot be practiced by the worldly person (*puthujjana*) who is unwilling to reduce his or her worldly desires, nor is it possible for one who is involved in extreme ascetic practices. In order to observe moderation, it is necessary to have strength, on the one side, and thoughtfulness, on the other. Therefore, we find in the formula of the Noble Eightfold Path (*aṭṭhangika magga*) that right concentration is supported by the two steps of right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*) and right mindfulness (*sammā-sati*). Of these, right effort promotes the ability to rise in one who is prone to sink into sensory pleasure, while right mindfulness becomes a safeguard against falling into extremes of asceticism.

Right concentration is not possible without that moral purity that purges one of impure deeds, words, and thoughts, and, therefore, it presupposes right speech (*sammā-vācā*), right action (*sammā-kammanta*), and right livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*). These are the three principles of *sīla*, or "moral purity", which is, necessarily, the preparatory ground to meditation. The training in these principles is the most fundamental aspect of Buddhism and forms the vital factor in contemplative life. Hence, first of all, one must school oneself in moral purity in accordance with the rules of the middle path in order to attain full and immediate results of meditation in an ascending scale of progress. The disciple who conforms himself to these ideals will acquire self-confidence, inward purity, absence of external fear, and, thereby, mental serenity, factors that are imperative for ultimate success in meditation.

The remaining two principles of the Noble Eightfold Path, right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) and right intention (*sammā-saṁkappa*), form the next important stage, the acquisition of *paññā*, or "wisdom". These three divisions of the Noble Eightfold Path are referred to in the *Nikāyas* as the "threefold training" (*tividhā sikkhā*) — morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*). This makes up the three divisions of the whole doctrine, which are also known as "the three groups" (*tayo khandhā*).

These three divisions, in their most highly developed form, constitute the Noble Eightfold Path, the interrelations of which are discussed in the Cūḷavedalla Sutta (The Shorter Series of Questions and Answers) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 44 [I, 301]).

> *"Lady, what is the Noble Eightfold Path?"*
>
> *"Friend, Visakhā, it is just this Noble Eightfold Path, that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration".*
>
> *"Lady, is the Noble Eightfold Path conditioned or unconditioned".*
>
> *"Friend, Visakhā, the Noble Eightfold Path is conditioned".*
>
> *"Lady, is the Noble Eightfold Path included within the three divisions, or is the Noble Eightfold Path divided into the three divisions?"*
>
> *"The Noble Eightfold Path is not included within the three divisions, friend, Visakhā, but, instead, the Noble Eightfold Path is divided into the three divisions. right speech, right action, and right livelihood — these three stages are*

included in the division of virtue. Right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration — these three stages are included in the division of concentration. Right view and right intention — these two stages are included in the division of wisdom."

Thus, the Noble Eightfold Path is a path of morality (*sīla*), of mental training (*samādhi*), and of wisdom (*paññā*).

Morality consists of right speech, right action, and right livelihood. Mental training consists of right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Wisdom consists of right view and right intention.

Thus, this liberating Eightfold Path is a path of inner training, of inner progress. By mere external worship, mere ceremonies and selfish prayer, one can never make any real progress in righteousness and insight. As the *Buddha* said:

"Be your own island of refuge, be your own shelter, do not seek after any other protection. Let the truth be your island of refuge, let the truth be your shelter, do not seek after any other protection."

To be of real effect and to ensure absolute inner progress, all our efforts must be based upon our own understanding and insight. All absolute inner progress is rooted in right understanding, and, without right understanding, there is no attainment of perfection and of the unshakable peace of *nibbāna*.

According to the *Buddha's* teaching, belief in the moral efficacy of mere external rites and rituals constitutes a great obstacle to inner progress. One who takes refuge in mere external practices is on the wrong path. For, in order to achieve real inner progress, all our efforts must necessarily be based on our own understanding and insight. Any real progress is rooted in right understanding, and, without right understanding, there will be no attainment of unshakable peace and holiness. Moreover, this blind belief in mere external practices is the cause of much misery and wretchedness in the world. It leads to mental stagnation, to fanaticism and intolerance, to self-exaltation and contempt for others, to contention, discord, war, strife, and bloodshed, as the history of the Middle Ages in Europe or even the religious extremism of our own times quite sufficiently testify. This belief in mere external practices dulls and deadens one's power of thought and stifles every higher emotion in man. It makes him a mental slave and favors the growth of all kinds of hypocrisy.

This shows that the Buddhist system of training oneself from beginning to end is consistent with the Noble Eightfold Path, leading to *vimutti* — "deliverance", or "final release". This is the system that the *Buddha* Himself discovered and used to achieve Buddhahood, or perfect enlightenment, and which He thereafter revealed to the world.

"Virtue and concentration, wisdom, supreme release — these are the things that were understood by the famous Gotama. Thus, fully comprehending them, the Buddha — the Ender of Ill, the Teacher of Insight, the Infinitely Peaceful One —

taught the Dhamma to the Monks.” (*Dīgha Nikāya* II, 123; *Anguttara Nikāya* II, 2.)

It is on this system that Buddhist meditation is based. Its practice is divided into two methods: *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Of these, *samatha*, or “calm-abiding”, consists in developing the utmost one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*) of thought upon a given subject of concentration (*kammaṭṭhāna*) and then raising one’s conception of it to an abstraction. In this form of meditation, consciousness is raised from a lower to a higher plane with the elimination of its distracting tendencies, which are called “hindrances” (*nīvaraṇa*), while concentration (*samādhi*) is developed to its highest form, that is to say, to the *jhāna* states, where the mind gradually absorbs itself into the abstract conception of the subject. The practice of this form of meditation is called “*samādhi*” or “*samatha-bhāvanā*”.

The proper development of *samādhi* produces the mental suppleness and purity required for full knowledge, and this suppleness and purity, being the proximate causes, induce inner light and clear vision. This vision, being supported by right view and right intention, tends to produce that insight which penetrates into the reality of all phenomenal existence. The development of this insight, or the awareness of the essence of things observed, is called “*vipassanā-bhāvanā*” and leads to full knowledge, whereby the aspirant to the highest level of *bhāvanā* becomes an *Arahat*, one who has won the goal.

These are the two great methods of Buddhist meditation, which will be explained in detail in the remainder of this book. ■

2

The Doctrine of Meditation In the Piṭakas

The *Sutta Piṭaka* gives a detailed exposition of the doctrine of meditation, tracing the gradual development of the system to its culmination in the attainment of *nibbāna*. The first thirteen discourses of the *Dīgha Nikāya* describe the scheme of the disciples' training, treating the three divisions in due order, first morality (*sīla*), the preliminary training, followed by concentration (*samādhi*) as the second division, and lastly wisdom (*paññā*), the means of attaining *nibbāna*, the desired objective.

In the Brahmajāla Sutta (The Complete Net of Views) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 1 [I, 13]), which sets forth sixty-two basic points of erroneous views with regard to the soul and the universe, we find *ceto-samādhi*, a form of mental concentration calculated to produce supernormal results such as the capacity for recollecting past existences, etc.

The Brahmajāla Sutta states that: "A certain ascetic or Brahmin, through ardor, exertion, application, effort, and right attention, experiences such mental concentration, that, when his mind is concentrated, he remembers manifold and various past existences."

However, he draws therefrom the false conclusion that the self and the world are either eternal or subject to complete annihilation. This type of *samādhi* must necessarily be regarded as imperfect from a Buddhist perspective, inasmuch as it leads to the illusory conceptions mentioned in the *sutta*.

True *samādhi*, namely, the kind recognized by Buddhism as right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*), is described in the second *sutta*, known as the Sāmaññaphala Sutta (The Fruits of the Homeless Life) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 2 [I, 47]).

The Sāmaññaphala Sutta points out the advantage of the contemplative life for an ascetic (*samaṇa*) of the type exemplified by a Buddhist Monk (*Bhikkhu*). Moreover, it is a justification for the founding of the order of Monks, while it shows the necessity for the practical rules and regulations (*pātimokkha*) initiated by the *Buddha* in order to guide their life of religious discipline so that they might achieve results both profitable and worthy of their efforts.

The *sutta* takes the form of a dialog between the *Buddha* and King Ajātasattu, who comes to visit the Blessed One seeking answers to various questions. The King desires to know whether the *Buddha* can show visible fruits (*phala*) in the life of one who is a *samaṇa*, such as are to be seen in the case of worldly pursuits.

In His reply to the King's inquiry, the *Buddha* first explains the general advantage of the life of a *samaṇa* who is well trained and self-possessed, and then proceeds to the higher and more special advantages. He shows that the true advantage and benefit of the disciple's life lies in the threefold training, with morality (*sīla*) as the preliminary phase, the practice of concentration (*samādhi*) as the second phase, and wisdom (*paññā*), the means of obtaining final release from the mental taints (*āsavas*), as the third phase. The exposition of these three divisions is continued up to the climax, the point of the attainment of *nibbāna*, in fulfillment of the promise given to the *samaṇa* who undertakes such a course of training.

The *sutta* states that the disciple (1) must be perfectly trained in the moral rules, (2) must keep his senses restrained, (3) must have acquired mindfulness and self-discipline, and (4) must be contented.

Having accomplished these four aims, he must thereafter seek a dwelling-place suitable for the practice of meditation — a secluded spot, in a forest, at the foot of a tree, on a mountain top, on the side of a hill, in a rock cave, in a cemetery, in an open field, or in a hut.

Selecting some such place of solitude and taking up his abode there, he should begin to practice meditation in the following manner: Having finished his meal, he should sit down, cross-legged and keeping his body erect. Then, inducing in himself the state of mindfulness, keen and alert, he should purify his mind of the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*), namely: (1) desire for gratification of the senses (*kāmacchanda*); (2) malice, hatred, ill will (*vyāpāda*); (3) sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*); (4) restlessness and worry (*uddhacca-kukkucca*); and (5) skeptical doubt (*vicikicchā*).

When he perceives that these five hindrances have been expelled from within him, exultation arises; as he experiences exultation, joy is born in him; when his mind experiences this joy, his body becomes serene; serenity, in turn, gives rise to happiness; and, with this feeling of happiness, his mind achieves concentration. This is the beginning of *samādhi*, which leads to the stages of *jhāna* (absorption) in the course of further development. As soon as the meditator's mind is free from the five hindrances, the first stage of *rūpajjhāna* is reached.

There are four stages of fine material absorption (*rūpajjhāna*) according to the system explained here. Their development is shown by the following formulae, which are arranged in ascending order, concentration becoming increasingly intense at each stage, until the faculty of concentration is firmly established.

The first *jhāna* formula runs as follows:

1. *"Having become free from sense desires (desire for gratification of the senses) (kāmacchanda) and evil thoughts (malice, hatred, ill will) (akusala dhamma), he attains and abides in the first (fine material) jhāna (rūpajjhāna), which is accompanied by initial application (vitakka), sustained application (vicāra), rapture (ecstasy, zest) (pīti), and happiness (sukha) arising from seclusion."*

In this state of *jhāna*, for the first time, "he suffuses, permeates, fills, and pervades his body with the joy and happiness arising from seclusion, and there is nothing at all in his body untouched by it."

The first fine material absorption thus arises with the elimination of the five hindrances, collected under the headings *kāma* and *akusala dhamma*. The disciple continues in the same meditation with determination to attain the second fine material absorption, the formula of which is as follows:

> 2. *"Again, with the elimination of initial application (vitakka) and sustained application (vicāra), in a state of internal serenity, with one-pointedness of mind (ekaggatā), he attains and abides in the second (fine material) jhāna (rūpajjhāna), which is accompanied by rapture (ecstasy, zest) (pīti), and happiness (sukha) produced by concentration (samādhi). He suffuses, fills, permeates, and pervades his body with the rapture and happiness produced by concentration, and there is nothing at all in his body untouched by it."*

It is in connection with this second fine material absorption that the word *samādhi* is employed, which, therefore, indicates that this *jhāna* is born from the *samādhi* of the first *jhāna*, in the sense of actual concentration. The initial application and sustained application of objects have now disappeared, and the disciple proceeds to the third fine material absorption. The formula for this *jhāna* runs as follows:

> 3. *"Again, with the cessation of rapture (ecstasy, zest) (pīti), he remains in equanimity (upekkhā), mindful and self-possessed, experiencing bodily happiness (sukha). He attains and abides in the third (fine material) jhāna (rūpajjhāna), becoming such a one as the Noble Ones (ariyas), or Arahats, praise. Abiding happily in equanimity and mindfulness, he suffuses, fills, permeates, and pervades his body with happiness devoid of rapture, and there is nothing at all in his body untouched by it."*

In this *jhāna*, his mind attains to a balance from which rapture has disappeared, although a feeling of happiness, which is akin to rapture, is still present. The meditator therefore uses every effort to gain release from happiness in turn. When his attempt is successful, he attains to the fourth fine material absorption, which is the culmination of mental concentration, as it is understood in this method of meditation.

The fourth *jhāna* formula runs as follows:

> 4. *"Again, with the abandonment of happiness and pain, together with the disappearance both of elation and depression, he attains and abides in the fourth (fine material) jhāna (rūpajjhāna), which is characterized by neither happiness nor pain, but only the perfection of pure mindfulness produced by equanimity (upekkhā). So he sits, permeating his body with his cleansed and purified mind, and nothing at all in his body is untouched by it."*

In this *jhāna samādhi*, there remains only one element, which is pure mental alertness, produced by perfect balance, free from all elements of disturbance. When this state of mind is attained, the meditator who has followed the Buddhist method of meditation is not inactive or thinking of nothingness, nor is he in a condition of trance, as is the case in some other systems. In this instance, he becomes increasingly alert, because this concentration has made his mind sharp and keen, purified by the processes of *jhāna* from sensory defilements, impulses, and emotions. In this condition, the mind becomes suitable and fit to possess the supernormal psychic powers (*abhiññā*) resulting from the training in concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*), which are set forth in the *sutta*.

The meditator has now reached the point at which full knowledge (*paññā*) arises as the visible and higher fruit (*phala*) of the *samaṇa* life.

> *"He, with his mind thus concentrated, purified, luminous, unstained, with the defilements gone, supple, ready to act, firm and imperturbable, turns and applies it to the acquisition of knowledge, that which consists of higher knowledge (wisdom) and higher powers (abhiññā). When continuing in the same state of the fourth (fine material) jhāna (rūpajjhāna) concentration, the meditator acquires magical powers (iddhi),*[15] *including the ability to materialize a shape, a 'mind-formed body' out of his own physical body."*

The aspirant, desiring to gain wisdom, reflects upon his own body and comes to the realization: "This body of mine has material form, is composed of the four elements, produced by a father and a mother, nourished by food, subject to impermanence, attrition, injury, breaking, and destruction; and this consciousness of mind is supported by it and is bound to it."

This reflection develops knowledge and insight (*ñāṇa-dassana*[16]), whereby the aspirant realizes the nature of his physical body, a realization that begets detachment and enables him to overcome the fear of rising from physical attachment.

He also acquires the faculty of clairaudience and is said to be possessed of the "divine ear", by which he can hear distant sounds, both human and divine.

He is able to read the states of mind of other individuals. He can perceive whether a person's mind is passionate or calm, angry or mild; whatever the state of mind, he can perceive it.

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[15] The magical powers (*iddhi*) constitute one of the six kinds of supernormal psychic powers (*abhiññā*). Many kinds of magical powers are distinguished, including: (1) the power of determination, that is, the power of becoming manifold forms; (2) the power of transformation, that is, the power of adopting another form; (3) the power of spiritual creation, that is, the power of letting issue from this body another mentally produced body; (4) the power of penetrating knowledge, that is, the power of inherent insight to remain unhurt in danger; (5) the power of penetrating concentration producing the same result. Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), p. 76.

[16] *Dassana* literally means "seeing, looking, noticing".

Having reached this stage, he is able to develop the three types of knowledge (*vijjā*):

1. He directs his mind, concentrated, pure, free from blemish, to the knowledge of his previous existences, recalling his various lives in their particulars and details, probing into the obscurity of past ages.

2. He then directs his mind to the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of other individuals. He sees, with a superhuman "divine eye", beings passing away and being reborn in different states of existence, high or low, happy or miserable, the varied results (*vipāka*) of their good and bad deeds (*kamma*).

3. Finally, he directs his mind to the knowledge of the destruction of the taints (*āsavas*).[17] Furthermore, he realizes: "This is suffering, this is the cause of suffering, this is the cessation of suffering, and this is the path leading to the cessation of suffering." He fully apprehends: "These are the taints, this is the cause of the taints, this is the cessation of the taints, and this is the way leading to the cessation of the taints." When he knows and realizes this, his mind is released from the taints: sense-desire, desire for (eternal) existence, wrong views, and ignorance. He gains the knowledge that he is released; he knows that "rebirth is no more for him, the religious life has been led, done is that which had to be done; for him, there is nothing further in this world of existence."

This is the final stage of wisdom (*paññā*), which leads to the state of *Arahat*, the attainment of *nibbāna*, the ultimate goal of training — there is no immediate, visible fruit higher, more excellent, or sweeter than this.

Thus ends the course of training explained in the Sāmaññaphala Sutta, and this course forms a complete whole, the entire training of an aspirant. The doctrine of meditation expounded in this discourse includes the four (fine material) absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*), the method of knowledge and insight (*ñāṇa-dassana*) (later termed "*vipassanā*"), the supernormal psychic powers (*abhiññā*), the magical powers (*iddhi*), the three types of knowledge (*vijjā*), and final liberation (*vimokkha*).

This method and doctrine are also found expressed in precisely the same words in the other *suttas* of the first *vagga* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, but their application is rather different. In the Ambaṭṭha Sutta (Pride of Birth and Its Fall) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 3 [I,

[17] *Āsava*, literally, "influxes": "taints, cankers, corruptions, intoxicants, biases". There is a list of four taints: (1) the taint of sense-desire (*kāmāsava*); (2) the taint of desiring (eternal) existence (*bhavāsava*); (3) the taint of (wrong) views (*diṭṭhāsava*); and (4) the taint of ignorance (*avijjāsava*). A list of three taints, which omits number 3, the taint of (wrong) views, is possibly older and is more frequent in the *suttas*. The fourfold list also occurs under the name of "floods" (*ogha*) and "yokes" (*yoga*). Through the path of Stream-Entry (*Sotāpatti*), the taint of (wrong) views is destroyed; through the path of Non-Returning (*Anāgāmī*), the taint of sense-desire is destroyed; and, through the path of Arahatship, the remaining taints are destroyed. Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), pp. 27—28.

100]), the practice of morality and concentration are referred to as *vijjā* and *caraṇa*, knowledge and conduct, and are contrasted with the arbitrary rules of social and ceremonial purity, discussed at great length by the young Ambaṭṭha.

In the Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta (Qualities of a True Brahmin) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 4 [I, 124]), it is stated that virtue (*sīla*) purifies wisdom (*paññā*) and wisdom purifies virtue, emphasizing again the interrelation of the two and the vital need for moral training before meditation is begun.

The Kūṭadanta Sutta (A Bloodless Sacrifice) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 5) speaks of this method as a form of sacrifice (*yañña*), less difficult and less troublesome, but bearing greater fruit and more advantages than the sacrifices conducted by Brahmins.

In the Mahāli Sutta (Heavenly Sights, Soul, and Body) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 6 [I, 153—157), this method is mentioned in speaking of concentration, and, when it is practiced in part, is said to produce divine sight and divine hearing, as is found in other systems. But the aim of a Buddhist practitioner is to cultivate *samādhi* in conformity with the Noble Eightfold Path, in order to destroy the ten fetters (*saṁyojana*) and thus obtain the results he expects from his religious endeavors. The aspirant who has practiced this method also sets aside the problem of "whether life and body are the same (*taṁ jīvaṁ, taṁ sarīraṁ*) or different (*aññaṁ jīvaṁ, aññaṁ sarīraṁ*)."

The same is repeated in the Jāliya Sutta (About Jāliya) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 7 [I, 160]), as to the method, the fulfillment of which puts an end to all the wrong views concerning soul, life, and body.

In the Kassapasīhanāda Sutta (The Great Lion's Roar) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 8 [I, 167—171), where the *Buddha* enumerates those points in which he partly agrees and partly disagrees with other teachers, this method is described as the "triple accomplishment" (*tividha sampadā*), which is unique to the system of the *Buddha*. It is also stated that, even though a person practices all forms of austerities (*tapas*), he is far from the fruit of his ascetic life, if *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* are not perfected. Furthermore, we find in this *sutta* an actual subject of meditation in the statement that the true *samaṇa* or Brahmin is he who cultivates universal and boundless loving-kindness (*mettā*), diffusing it to all beings, and thereby obtaining full knowledge and final release of heart.

The Poṭṭhapāda Sutta (States of Consciousness) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 9 [I, 180—184]) begins with a discussion about the stages of the transition of consciousness (*abhisaññā nirodha*) in a trance, as it were, and with illusory conceptions with regard to the soul theory, and then sets forth the manner in which a particular form of consciousness arises as the result of training in one idea, while another passes away. This training (*sikkhā*) corresponds to the threefold training explained in the Sāmaññaphala Sutta. The four jhānic states are also mentioned here, each of them in the form of training, to show how, by abandoning one idea, the mind attains to another in the course of progress through the stages of *jhāna*. In addition to the four fine material absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*), the formless, or immaterial, stages of absorption (*arūpajjhāna*) are mentioned in this *sutta* as a further development, and these stages are spoken of as the

samāpatti, "attainments", resulting from the threefold training. This forms an additional important aspect of the *samādhi* doctrine, as we shall see later.

In the Subha Sutta (Morality, Concentration, Wisdom) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 10 [I, 204]), Venerable Ānanda explains this system of threefold training to the young Subha, the son of Todeyya, the Brahmin, arranged under the headings of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, the principal groups of the noble doctrine (*Dhamma*), and the words used correspond almost exactly to those of the Sāmaññaphala Sutta. The purpose of this *sutta* is to explain how the *Buddha* trains his disciples to gain deliverance (*vimutti*) from suffering (*dukkha*).

The Kevaddha[18] Sutta (What Brahmā Did Not Know) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 11 [I, 211]) claims that this threefold training is the brightest jewel in the *Buddha's* gift to mankind, made possible through the power of His enlightenment.

In the Lohicca Sutta (Good and Bad Teachers) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 12 [I, 233—234]), the method is referred to as the teaching of a teacher who teaches so noble a method of training that the disciples achieve perfection, having accomplished the three noble qualities of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*.

The Tevijja Sutta (The Threefold Knowledge [The Way to Brahmā]) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 13 [I, 235]), which discusses the various paths recognized by Vedic Brahmins as leading to companionship with Brahmā (*Brahma-sahavyatā*), explains that the *Buddha's* method of training is the right path to that goal, if one desires to reach the *Brahma* world (*Brahmaloka*).

This same method is also found in the other *Nikāyas*, especially the *Majjhima Nikāya*, in the discourses where the description of the *Buddha's* enlightenment is given and where the method of training is explained. The references will be mentioned when the methods of meditation and their advantages and attainments come to be discussed in detail.

The *Vinaya Piṭaka*, which deals mainly with the rules and regulations that must be followed by the order (*Sangha*) of *Bhikkhus* (Monks) and *Bhikkhunīs* (Nuns), thus forming the first part of the threefold training, that is, *sīla*, also elaborates the system of discipline essential for meditation. Among the rules created for the guidance of the ordained members of the *Sangha*, the fourth *pārājikā*[19] rule refers to the doctrine of meditation. The rule specifies that any ordained member of the *Sangha* who falsely claims to possess those superhuman qualities (*uttarimanussa*) that are the special attainments beyond those of ordinary men is to be expelled from the order.

In the *Sutta Vibhanga* (*Vinaya Piṭaka* III, 92—93), these superhuman qualities are divided into ten categories, as follows:

1. *Jhāna*: the four fine material absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*).

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[18] Also spelled Kevaḍḍa or Kevaṭṭa.

[19] The "major offenses", of which there are four: (1) sexual intercourse; (2) theft; (3) taking a human life or inducing another to commit suicide; and (4) falsely boasting of supernormal powers. If any of these rules are broken, the transgressor must be expelled from the *Sangha*.

2. *Vimokkha*: the threefold liberation — (1) liberation from the conception of a self or soul; (2) liberation from the illusion of permanence and from hankering after the objects of desire; and (3) liberation from hatred and delusion.
3. *Samādhi*: the threefold concentration — concentration attained by the insight (*vipassanā*) into the (1) impermanence, (2) suffering nature, and (3) soullessness or essencelessness of conditioned things (*saṁkhārā*).
4. *Samāpatti*: here, *samāpatti* means the threefold attainment, as with *samādhi*.
5. *Ñāṇadassana*: knowledge (*ñāṇa*) and insight (*dassana*) — the threefold insight into (1) the knowledge of previous existences, (2) the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings, and (3) the knowledge of the destruction of the taints (*āsavas*).
6. *Magga-bhāvanā*: cultivation of the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment[20] (*bodhipakkhiya-dhammā*).
7. *Phala sacchikiriyā*: realization of the fruit (*phala*) of the four stages of the path leading to Arahatship.
8. *Kilesappāhana*: elimination (*pāhana*) of the defilements (*kilesa*) of (1) greed (*lobha*), (2) hatred (*dosa*), and (3) delusion (*moha*).
9. *Vinīvaraṇatā*: the absence of the defilements just mentioned.
10. *Suññāgāre abhirati*: delight in the practice of *jhāna* in solitude.

The items mentioned in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* contain the whole doctrine of Buddhist meditation, and the mentioning of them there is very important evidence in consideration of the claim that the doctrine of meditation was fully expounded in the earliest stage of the *Buddha's* teaching.

In the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, the doctrine of meditation is elaborated from the psychological point of view, and, especially in the *Dhammasangaṇī* (31—75), it is explained with the methods of the practice connected with the analysis of the higher states of consciousness. In the *Vibhanga* (XII, pp. 224—271), there is a separate chapter called "Jhāna Vibhanga", where the preliminary method of training and the eight stages of absorption (*jhāna*) are explained with reference to both the *suttanta* and *Abhidhamma* teachings.

Thus, the doctrine of meditation expounded in the *Piṭakas* is formulated in eight main divisions: (1) *jhāna* (absorptions); (2) *vimokkha* (liberation); (3) *samādhi* (concentration); (4) *samāpatti* (attainment); (5) *vipassanā* (insight); (6) *magga* (path); (7) *phala* (fruit); and (8) *nibbāna* (*nirvāṇa*).

The further discussion of this subject will naturally follow the development of these principles as explained in the Pāḷi Canon and Commentaries. ■

[20] The thirty-seven "requisites of enlightenment" or "constituents of enlightenment" are: (1) the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*); (2) the four right efforts (*padhāna*); (3) the four roads to power (*iddhi-pāda*); (4) the five spiritual faculties (*indriya*); (5) the five spiritual powers (*bala*); (6) the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*); and (7) the Noble Eightfold Path (*magga*).

3

Definition of Terms

In their description of the theory and practice of Buddhist meditation, the Pāḷi scriptures make use of many technical terms. It will therefore be advisable, in the interests of clarity and for the sake of convenience, to translate them regularly by certain definite English terms. It should be noted that all of the technical terms mentioned here are used strictly in a Buddhist sense.

1. Samādhi

The word *samādhi*, best rendered in English by "concentration", is the most important of these technical terms. Moreover, it is one of the original terms used by the *Buddha* Himself, for it occurs in His first discourse. It is used in the sense of *sammā-samādhi*, "right concentration".[21] *Samādhi* comes from *saṁ-ā-dhā-*, meaning "to put together", "to concentrate". It refers to a highly focused state of mind. In a technical sense, it signifies both the state of mind and the method designed to induce that state.

In the dialog (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 301) between Dhammadinnā Bhikkhunī and the devotee Visākhā, *samādhi* is discussed both as a state of mind and as a method of mental training. Visākhā asks Dhammadinnā Bhikkhunī: "What is *samādhi*?" She responds: "*Samādhi* is *cittassa ekaggatā*," literally, "*Samādhi* is one-pointedness of mind." "What induces it?" "The four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) induce it." "What are its requisites?" "The four supreme efforts[22] (*sammappadhāna*) are its requisites." "What is the development (*bhāvanā*) of it?" "Cultivation and increase of those self-same

[21] Right concentration, the last stage of the Noble Eightfold Path (*Aṭṭhangika-Magga*), consists of gaining one-pointedness of mind (*ekaggatā*) and entering into and abiding in the four fine material absorptions (*rūpajjhānas*) and the four immaterial absorptions (*arūpajjhānas*). Such a kind of mental concentration is one that is directed towards a morally wholesome object and always bound up with right thought (*sammā-saṁkappa*), right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*), and right mindfulness (*sammā-sati*).

[22] *Sammappadhāna*, "supreme effort", is identical with the sixth stage of the Noble Eightfold Path, right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*). Right effort is the effort to put forth the energy, to prod the mind, and to struggle: (1) to prevent unarisen unwholesome mental states from arising; (2) to abandon unwholesome mental states that have already arisen; (3) to develop wholesome mental states that have not yet arisen; and (4) to maintain and perfect wholesome mental states that have already arisen. In other words, it is the fourfold effort that we make to overcome and avoid fresh bad actions by body, speech, and mind; and the effort that we make in developing fresh actions of righteousness, inner peace, and wisdom, and in cultivating them to perfection.

principles — mindfulness (*sati*) and supreme effort (*sammappadhāna*) — are the means to develop it."

In this dialog, *samādhi*, as a mental state, is defined as *cittassa ekaggatā*, "one-pointedness of mind", and this appears to be the primary definition given in the *suttas*. In the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, this definition is repeated and elaborated upon with a number of words that are very similar, indeed, almost synonymous.

The *Dhammasanganī* (10) defines *cittassa ekaggatā* as follows:

> *"Stability, steadiness, and steadfastness of mind, absence of scattering and distraction, unscattered mentality, tranquility, the faculty of and the power of concentration, right concentration."*

All these terms, though differing in their forms and expressing different aspects, are united in the one general sense of *samādhi* — that is, *cittassa ekaggatā*. Venerable Buddhaghosa Thera's commentary in the *Atthasālinī* (118) says: "One-pointedness of mind is *cittassa ekaggatā*, and it is the name of *samādhi*."

In the *Visuddhimagga*, Venerable Buddhaghosa gives the same definition but makes use of one more word. The special word that sheds more light upon the meaning is *kusala*, "virtuous, wholesome", that is to say, one-pointedness of mind is the collected state of moral, or wholesome, consciousness (*kusala citta*). In the *Atthasālinī*, the same meaning is attributed to *sammā-samādhi*: "Right concentration is proper concentration, or moral concentration." Furthermore, it is *nīyānika*[23] *samādhi*, concentration (*samādhi*) that leads to emancipation (*nīyānika*).

In Buddhist teaching, therefore, *samādhi* is to be understood as a pure state of mind, a necessary preliminary to the higher progress towards Arahatship, or final liberation.

The principal characteristic of this state is the absence of mental wandering and agitation; the unification of the states of mind that rise with it is its essential function. Tranquility and knowledge are its manifestation. When this state has been attained, all the mists of passion (*rāga*) are dissipated and are replaced by the clearness of insight (*vipassanā*). Thus, in all respects, the Buddhist term *samādhi* is a positive state of mind, as opposed to passive unconsciousness, or a hypnotic state of mind.

It is also the name given to the method, or system of meditation, that leads to a well balanced, tranquil mental state, and, in this connection, it is known as *samādhi*, "concentration", or *samatha-bhāvanā*, "calm-abiding", or "tranquility meditation", which precedes *vipassāna-bhāvanā*, "insight meditation", or "analytical meditation". The explanation given by Dhammadinnā Bhikkhunī, quoted above, refers to the method of *samādhi* as *bhāvanā*, or the "cultivation" of mindfulness and supreme efforts, which are, respectively, the two principles of right mindfulness and right effort of the Noble Eightfold Path, of which right concentration is the culmination. When right effort, which means well directed mental and physical energy, is cultivated with right mindfulness,

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[23] Also spelled *niyyānika*, literally, "leading out (of *saṁsāra*)."

well established *samādhi* is the result; for right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*) supports *samādhi*, preventing it from sinking into a state of mental passivity. Right mindfulness (*sammā-sati*) fortifies the mind with good qualities and acts as the guiding principle that keeps it alert and steady in the *samādhi* state, not permitting it to lapse into a subconscious condition. These two principles join forces to produce right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*), and their development embraces the whole field of meditation common to both systems, *samādhi*, or *samatha-bhāvanā*, and *vipassanā-bhāvanā*. But, when the term "*samādhi*" is used with reference to the method, it must be understood to mean the system that leads to concentration in the preliminary stage, that is to say, the stage preceding *vipassanā*.

From what has been said, it should be clear that *samādhi*, both in its literal and technical senses, means a state of mind that is to be developed by systematic training. This training develops and perfects a state of mental concentration, which results in spiritual progress experienced in and through the human organism, up to the point at which self-illumination is attained.

2. Ceto-Samādhi

The term "*ceto-samādhi*" is found in *Dīgha Nikāya* (I, 13), used with reference to an advanced form of *samādhi* (*dhyāna*) practiced by non-Buddhists, who employed it to further their speculations concerning previous existences, etc. Here again, the word means concentration of mind, but in a highly developed state in which one attains the knowledge, or recollection, of one's previous existences (*pubbenivāsa* — one of the types of fivefold higher knowledge). The term, moreover, has been used in a general sense as synonymous with *samādhi*, but in conjunction with the particular verb *phusati*, thus: *cetosamādhiṁ phusati*, "He comes in contact with *ceto-samādhi*." This indicates that the term implies that the state of *samādhi* has previously been experienced. In this sense, it is comparable to the attainment of "trance", in which a mystic experiences "divine vision". But, in its Buddhist usage, the term has an entirely different significance, namely, as synonymous with *citta-samādhi*, "concentration of mind".

3. Ceto-Vimutti

When *samādhi* is developed to the culminating point on the path to *nibbāna* and associated with full knowledge, it delivers, or emancipates, the mind from its defilements (*cetopakkilesa*) and yields the fruit (*phala*) of Arahatship. In this state, *samādhi* is applied to the "one-pointedness" of the *Arahat's* mind and is then called *ceto-vimutti*, "mental deliverance", or "mental emancipation" (*Dīgha Nikāya* III, 71; *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 35, 71, etc.). This is the highest and final state of *samādhi*, called "*phala-samādhi*", or "concentration leading to the fruit of Arahatship". But *ceto-vimutti* has also been used, as a general term, to denote different stages of *samādhi*. In the Mahāli Sutta (*Dīgha Nikāya*

II, 265), *ceto-vimutti* refers to the *Arahat's* mind, free from all fetters (*saṁyojana*) or bonds of passion. But, in the Sampasādaniya Sutta (*Dīgha Nikāya* III, 104), the term is used in reference to the first fine material absorption (*rūpajjhāna*), which is induced by meditation upon the constituent parts of the body (*kāya-gatā-sati*). In addition, in the *Anguttara Nikāya* (IV, 357), *ceto-vimutti* is the term applied to *samādhi* that is but partially developed and immature (*aparipakka-cetovimutti*). Thus, we see that this term can have various usages — but, in every case, it refers to an advanced, or intensified, state of concentration.

4. Ceto-Samatha

Samādhi, being one-pointedness of mind, exerts a salutary influence upon the mind of one who is engaged in the process of its development. *Samādhi* calms one's mental wavering and agitation, subdues trepidation, and establishes and sustains an inner serenity (*samatha*). The state of *samādhi* is, therefore, described as *ceto-samatha*, "tranquility of mind", or "mental quiescence" (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 6 [I, 33]). The term *samatha* itself is found in the sense "calm-abiding", denoting the system known as *samatha-bhāvanā* (*Dīgha Nikāya* III, 273; *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 494; *Saṁyutta Nikāya* IV, 360).

5. Citta-Bhāvanā

The Buddhist method of spiritual training is designed for a dual purpose: (1) the cultivation of the mind (*citta*) and (2) the cultivation of insight (*vipassanā*). Here, the term *citta-bhāvanā*, "cultivation of the mind", or "mental development", is used, referring to the system of meditation. During the process of systematic meditation, the mind is trained, until, with the full development of *samādhi*, the whole mental power is concentrated, and the mind achieves self-mastery. In this condition, it can resist the current of feeling, whether it be painful or pleasant. It can even endure deadly pain and remain unshaken by sensory stimuli. The practice of *samādhi* is therefore called "*citta-bhāvanā*", and it implies both mental and physical training. The whole system of *samādhi* meditation is expounded in the *Visuddhimagga* by Venerable Buddhaghosa under the term *citta-bhāvanā*.

6. Citta-Visuddhi

Samādhi, as a mental quality, cleanses and purifies the mind from taints (*āsava*) and defilements (*kilesa*); hence, it is called "*citta-visuddhi*". It is discussed by the Elders Sāriputta and Puṇṇa Mantāṇiputta in the Rathavinīta Sutta (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 24 [I, 147]), where the whole system of religious life is expounded, together with the seven

stages of purification[24] (*satta-visuddhi*). The term is generally applied to the state of mental purity in the path of *vipassanā*.

7. Adhicitta

When the mind has attained the state of *samādhi*, it has raised itself above and remains superior to its normal lowly condition, in which it is but a slave to every sensory impulse and emotion. The mind, being thus exalted, is in a state in which it cannot be affected, either positively or negatively, by external objects. It is then known as "*adhicitta*", the "higher mind", and this implies a steady ascent through the various stages of development. The whole system of mental training is embraced by this term in the expression *adhicitta sikkhā*, the "training of higher mind." (*Dīgha Nikāya* III, 222; *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 119; *Anguttara Nikāya* I, 236.)

The above are the most important terms used to distinguish *samādhi* and the methods of its attainment. They are generally employed in the Buddhist scriptures to denote the doctrine of *samādhi* meditation.

8. Vipassanā

The word "*vipassanā*" is a purely Buddhist term and has quite a distinct meaning. It is derived from the verb *vi-passati*, literally, "to see in many ways", which means "to see; to penetrate an object thoroughly". Hence, *vipassanā* is best rendered by "insight" in English. "*Paññā*", "wisdom, full knowledge", and "*ñāṇa-dassana*", "knowledge and vision", are the terms generally used to define *vipassanā*. A description of these terms is frequently given in the discourses, while they are further elaborated in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. The term *vipassanā* is particularly applied to the "full knowledge", or "insight", acquired by the discerning of the three characteristics of the phenomenal word: (1) impermanence (*anicca*), or transitoriness; (2) suffering (*dukkha*); and (3) non-self (*anattā*). In the doctrine of meditation, the term *vipassanā* signifies the whole system designed to induce that insight, with or without the practice of *samādhi*. In the scriptures, the term *vipassanā* is always used together with *samatha*, whenever meditation is divided

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[24] As noted, in the *Majjhima Nikāya*, there is a *sutta* entitled the "The Relay Chariots" (no. 24). In this discourse, Venerable Sāriputta, one of the *Buddha's* chief disciples, and Venerable Puṇṇa Mantāṇiputta are discussing the path that leads to the realization of *nibbāna*. During their conversation, the following stages of purification (*visuddhi*) are mentioned: (1) purification of virtue (*sīla-visuddhi*); (2) purification of mind (*citta-visuddhi*); (3) purification of view (*diṭṭhi-visuddhi*); (4) purification by overcoming doubt (*kankhāvitaraṇa-visuddhi*); (5) purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path (*maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*); (6) purification by knowledge and vision of the way (*paṭipadā-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*); and (7) purification by knowledge and vision (*ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*). These stages, however, are not elaborated upon anywhere in the *Buddha's* discourses. The main source for uncovering their precise meaning is the *Visuddhimagga* by Venerable Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa.

into two systems: *Samatho ca vipassanā ca*. (*Dīgha Nikāya* III, 273; *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 494; *Saṁyutta Nikāya* IV, 360; *Anguttara Nikāya* I, 95; etc.)

9. Jhāna

Jhāna occupies a very prominent place in the system of Buddhist meditation. But there is no word connected with meditation whose meaning has been so misrepresented and confused by its English renderings as the Pāḷi word "*jhāna*". The term *jhāna* has a distinct meaning that is entirely unique to Buddhism. Its Sanskrit equivalent is *dhyāna*, a term that has a very different meaning in the Hindu *yoga* systems. The word *jhāna*, formed from the verb *jhāyati*, "to think upon" or "to meditate", appears in the Buddhist formula of the four *jhānas* (which were later expanded to five). Probably its best English rendering is "absorption".

This *jhāna* is twofold: (1) that which concentrates upon a mental object intensely (*ārammaṇa-upa-ni-jjhāna*); and (2) that which examines its characteristic marks or features (*lakkhaṇa-upa-ni-jjhāna*). Of these, the first, *ārammaṇa-upa-ni-jjhāna*, implies the eight stages (the four fine material absorptions [*rūpajjhāna*] and the four formless, or immaterial, absorptions [*arūpajjhāna*]), which, collectively, are known as *samāpatti*, "attainments". When joined with *upacāra samādhi*, that is, "access concentration", or "neighborhood concentration", the whole system is divided into nine stages, of which *upacāra samādhi* is the preliminary stage, and the *jhānas* are the successive stages of development in the system of *samādhi* meditation.

The transition from a lower state to progressively higher states of concentration burns off the mental defilements (*kilesa*) and allows the meditator to experience various supernormal states of consciousness as the intensity of concentration increases.

In this book, the Pāḷi term *jhāna* will be used to describe the developed mental process of meditation in both the *samādhi* and *vipassanā* methods. As noted above, when the *samādhi* method is being discussed, *ārammaṇa-upa-ni-jjhāna* is implied. However, when the *vipassanā* method is being discussed, *lakkhaṇa-upa-ni-jjhāna* is implied.

10. Bhāvanā

Meditation by means of mental development is called "*bhāvanā*". The term *bhāvanā* is used to denote only the practical methods of mental training. It embraces, in its multitudinous connotations, the whole system, together with the practices that have been developed from it. When the term *bhāvanā* occurs in the scriptures, it generally indicates the practice, or cultivation, of mediation, while the verb form *bhāveti* is used to denote the action, "to practice", "to cultivate", 'to train (the mind)", etc.

> *"Rāhula, practice the meditation on loving-kindness (mettā)."* (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 424.)

> *"Cultivate the mind by meditation upon impurities (asubha[25])."* (*Khuddaka Nikāya*, *Sutta Nipāta* 341.)

Unlike *jhāyati*, which is only used to indicate "to think upon" a mental object, or to hold a mental image derived from an external object, *bhāveti* is used for any form of mental development.

Venerable Buddhaghosa Thera derives the verb *bhāveti* from the root *bhū-* "to be" or "to become" and compares it with *janeti* "to beget", *uppādeti* "to produce" or "to cause to rise", *vaḍḍheti* "to increase" or "to develop" (*Atthasālinī* 163). He also cites passages from the scriptures to show that *bhāveti* is used in the sense of "producing" (*uppādana*) and "increasing" (*vaddhana*). Elsewhere, he says that *bhāveti* means "to beget" or "to produce again and again" (*punappunaṁ janeti*) within oneself; that is to say, "to produce" or "to develop" the object, keeping it in one's own heart (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* Commentary, 158).

From these canonical definitions and from its use in the Canon, it can be seen that the word *bhāvanā* has a meaning that is stronger and more active than that of the English word "meditation". The Pāḷi word *bhāvanā* has various nuances that do not exist in the English word "meditation", such as "producing", "acquiring", "mastering", "developing", "cultivating", "reflecting upon", in addition to "mental training". Nonetheless, we shall use the word "meditation" in this book, since it has now become the standard English rendering for the term *bhāvanā*.

It is true that, in certain *bhāvanā* practices, there is a thought process that is similar to that of mental praying. It involves the repetition of some particular words or phrases, such as "*mettā*, *mettā*" in the practice of loving-kindness or "earth, earth", etc., in *kasiṇa* practice. But this is quite different from mental praying. It is "thinking" *in a special manner*, to edify something in oneself, something that is always *wholesome* or *good*. The essential thing here is the productive factor, that which produces or manifests the essential quality or truth that is contained in the object of thought within one's own character. For example, when one practices the meditation on loving-kindness (*mettā bhāvanā*), one not only thinks upon "loving-kindness" but also makes it come into being and grow stronger in oneself, so as to eradicate thoughts of hatred, ill will, animosity, malice, aversion, enmity, and the like. As a result of this practice, one is able to extend unconditional loving-kindness (*mettā*) to all living beings, including one's enemies. In this sense, *bhāvanā* is "becoming", that is to say, one becomes the object upon which one meditates.

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[25] *Asubha* means "impurity, loathsomeness, foulness". In the *Visuddhimagga* (VI), it refers to the ten cemetery contemplations (*sīvathika*), while, in the Girimānanda Sutta (*Anguttara Nikāya* X, 50), it refers to the thirty-two body parts (*kāya-gatā-sati*). The contemplation of the body's impurity is an antidote to the hindrance (*nīvaraṇa*) of sense-desire (*kāmacchanda*) and the wrong-view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) that sees what is truly impure as beautiful. Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), p. 29.

In conclusion, it can be said that *bhāvanā* means the active process of mental training leading to the accumulation of all good and wholesome qualities within oneself necessary to become apt or fit for the attainment of *nibbāna*.

11. Yoga

The word "*yoga*", which is the technical term used in the Hindu *Saṁkhyā yoga* philosophy and in the system of meditation developed therein, is not a common term in the Buddhist scriptures, the usual term for "meditation" being *bhāvanā* (see above). Even so, the term is not entirely unknown in Buddhism, for it is occasionally used in the sense of "mental activity" and also "meditation".

It occurs in the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (IV, 80 and V, 442) in the expression *patisallāna yoga*, which means "joining with", "entry into", or "advance to inward tranquility"; while the phrase *yogo karaṇīyo* is frequently used in the sense that "effort in meditational activities should be made" (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 472; *Saṁyutta Nikāya*, II, 131 and V, 414; *Anguttara Nikāya* II, 93 and V, 94). It is also found in the sense "meditation", as seen in *yogā ve jāyati bhūri; ayogā saṁkhayo* "wisdom arises through meditation; without meditation, wisdom is lost" (*Dhammapada*, verse 282).

The *Dhammapada* Commentary, in reference to this passage, says: "Here, *yoga* means proper attentive reflection upon the thirty-eight subjects of meditation, which are called "*kammaṭṭhāna*" (*Dhammapada* Commentary 3, 421).

Though the word *yoga* never achieved popularity as a technical term in the Theravādin School to denote "meditation", the words *yogi* and *yogāvacara*, "one who practices *yoga*", "one devoted to mental training", occur frequently in the Commentaries in the sense of "meditator".

Thus, the word *yoga* does appear in Buddhist texts in the sense of "meditation", but it always preserves its Buddhist meaning. "*Yoga*", in the quite distinct sense of "yoking", "joining together", or "uniting", is also frequently found in the Buddhist literature, but it then applies to *kāma*, *bhava*, *diṭṭhi*, and *avijjā*[26] (*Dīgha Nikāya* III, 284), since beings are united with "senses", "existence", "opinions", and "ignorance", all of which must be destroyed.

12. Padhāna

Padhāna, which is from the verb *pa-dhā-* "to do strongly or vigorously", means "exertion", or "strenuous effort". In the scriptures, it is applied to the effort made to achieve spiritual progress. It occurs in the *Majjhima Nikāya* (I, 167) referring to the noble effort made by the *Buddha* at Uruvelā for the attainment of enlightenment. In the *Buddhavaṁsa* (II, 34), the word is used in the sense of "meditation".

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[26] The four taints (*āsava*).

Again, the effort made for the development of higher mind is termed *samma-ppadhāna*,[27] which is essential to the practice of concentration (*samādhi*). It seems that, as a result of its occurrence in such passages, *padhāna* became a technical term used for the practice of meditation, and it is frequently found in this sense in the Commentaries. It sometimes also appears in the form of a title, as in, for example, Padhāna Tissa Thera, that is, "the Elder Tissa, the meditator" (*Dhammapada* Commentary 3:142). The place selected for meditation (*padhāna*) is called *padhāna-ghara* — at Anurādhapura in Śri Lanka, there is a meditation hall known as "*Padhāna-ghara*", connected with the famous Mahāvihāra,[28] which, for many years, was the center of Buddhism in Śri Lanka.

13. Kammaṭṭhāna

Kammaṭṭhāna, "subject of meditation", is a late expression used by the Buddhist commentators to denote both the subjects of meditation and the methods of practicing them. In the *Visuddhimagga* (1, 89), Venerable Buddhaghosa Thera uses the term in referring to the forty subjects of *samādhi* meditation. However, in the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*,[29] Venerable Anuruddha Thera uses the term to signify the subjects and methods of both *samatha bhāvanā* and *vipassanā bhāvanā*.

The word is not found with this special sense in the *Piṭakas*. The term does occur, however, in the *Majjhima Nikāya* (II, V 97), where it refers, in the first place, to household occupations (*gharāvāsa-kammaṭṭhāna*), such as agriculture (*kasi*) and trade (*vaṇijjā*). In the second place, it refers to religious duties: *pabbajjā-kammaṭṭhāna*, "the work, or duties, of one who has renounced the household life". The term literally means "the place, or base (*ṭhāna*), of work, or action (*kamma*)". In the scriptures, it is generally used in the sense of the work, or business, of a householder. *Kammaṭṭhāna* is used in the Commentaries, probably in relation to *pabbajjā-kammaṭṭhāna*, to designate the subjects and methods of meditation, considered as a systematic exercise of mental training.

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[27] *Samma-ppadhāna*, "right exertion", is identical with the sixth stage of the Noble Eightfold Path, right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*).

[28] Buddhist monastery founded in the late 3rd century BCE in Anurādhapura, the ancient capital of Ceylon (modern Śri Lanka). The monastery was built by the Sinhalese king Devanampiya Tissa not long after his conversion to Buddhism. Until about the 10th century CE, it was a great cultural and religious center and the chief stronghold of Theravādin Buddhism. Because of the extreme importance of Buddhism in Śri Lanka, the prestige of the Monks of the Mahāvihāra was such that their power and influence often extended well beyond religion into the realm of secular politics. The religious authority of the Mahāvihāra was first challenged in the late 1st century BCE by a group of Buddhist Monks who broke away and formed the Abhayagiri-vihāra. Although an ever-present rival, this monastic order — save for brief periods of royal patronage, notably in the 3rd and 7th centuries CE — could not permanently usurp the favored position of the Mahāvihāra order. The centralized authority and preeminence of the Mahāvihāra, however, gradually disintegrated until, by the 11th century CE, it had ceased to be a force in the religious life of Śri Lanka.

[29] Ācariya Sumangala's Commentary on the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha* explains that the word *kamma-ṭṭhāna* implies both the mental object (*ālambana*) in the sense of the basis upon which the twofold method of meditation (that is, both *samatha bhāvanā* and *vipassanā bhāvanā*) is established and the method of meditating, in the sense of the support through which further progress in the practice of meditation is made.

In connection with *bhāvanā*, it generally implies the act of meditating upon a given subject, undertaken with a view to developing *samādhi* or *vipassanā*.

From all of the above, it will be seen that *kammaṭṭhāna* is a term of wide significance, embracing a succession of practices and exercises, which form the basis, or framework, of all those modes of meditation by means of which Arahatship is attained. Thus, for example, the first fine material absorption (*rūpajjhāna*) is a state, while the ten *asubha* ("cemetery contemplations") subjects are the *kammaṭṭhāna*, or subjects of practice, through which that state is achieved.

14. Ārammaṇa

The word "*ārammaṇa*" generally signifies any "object" on which the mind and thoughts rest, or dwell, using it as a support, or basis. In its psychological application, it implies the subjective thoughts, the contact of which determines the process of consciousness. Generally speaking, *ārammaṇa* is applied to any external object that may be presented to the senses as well as the mental impression derived therefrom, the latter of which lends support to the mind and enables it to grasp an idea. According to the *Abhidhamma* teaching, the mind does not become active until it is stimulated by an external object coming into contact with the senses. Such objects are called "*ārammaṇa*" in the sense of *ālambana*, that which supports, or occupies, the mind. Thus *ārammaṇa*, or *ālambana*, implies both the objects perceived and the representative images or impressions of them, which are formulated in the mind, causing the thought process to function.

In relation to meditation, *ārammaṇa* is employed in a more restricted sense, namely, to imply a given subject of meditation and the mental image derived from that subject. The term is also frequently used in the Commentaries in this sense.

The phrase *ārammaṇaṁ gaṇhāti* is also used in connection with meditation; it means "to obtain", or "to lay hold of", an idea, a topic, or a thought upon which the mind is brought to bear with intense concentration, until supernormal illumination is attained. In this case, *ārammaṇa* is applied to the mental object that should be derived from the object of meditation and that is technically spoken of as "*nimitta*" (see below), "sign", or "mark". Thus, the word *ārammaṇa*, when used as a technical term in connection with meditation, implies, in its most comprehensive sense, the "object of contemplation".

15. Nimitta

Usually rendered "sign" or "mark", the word "*nimitta*" is used in the scriptures as a psychological term denoting the mental attributes of sentient existence. Literally, it means "that which marks or indicates", and it is generally applied to evil tendencies such as lust (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and ignorance (*avijjā*), which are regarded as the conditions that determine the mental disposition (*nimitta-karaṇā dhammā*) of the individual. It is

also used to indicate the apparent characteristics of things or objects that give rise to passionate craving (*taṇhā*) in the mind, as, for example, in the phrase *cakkhunā rūpaṁ disvā nimittagghāhi*, "seeing a form (*rūpa*) with the eye (*cakkhu*), one notes the marks (*nimitta*), or general appearance" (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 70).

As one of the most important technical terms used in the doctrine of meditation, the word *nimitta* has quite a different meaning. It is then distinguished as *samādhi-nimitta*, "the mark of concentration" (*Dhammasangaṇī* 1357), which, according to the *Visuddhimagga* (I, 125), is divided into two parts: (1) *uggaha-nimitta*, "acquired image, or sign", and (2) *paṭibhāga-nimitta*, "counterpart image, or sign". Conversely, the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha* divides it into three parts, the first division being *parikamma-nimitta*, "preliminary image, or sign". The object selected for meditation, such as a *kasiṇa* device, is termed *parikamma-nimitta*, "the preliminary (*parikamma*) sign, mark, image, or object of concentration". After long concentration on the *kasiṇa*, during which the eyes are fixed upon it, the meditator is able to retain a mental image of it, an exact copy, or "mirror-image", of the original, which, with constant practice, may be visualized as clearly as the original object perceived by the eyes — this image is called "*uggaha-nimitta*", "the acquired mark, sign, or image", "the mentally-created image". In its most general sense, *uggaha* is used for anything learned or studied, being applied to something that has been committed to memory, such as a verse that one has learned by heart. This type of *nimitta*, being the first sign of mental illumination produced by the successful practice of meditation, is said to have become established in the mind like something learned by heart. Once this image is established in the mind of the meditator, he is able to visualize it whenever he wishes, so that he is at liberty to continue his practice without gazing at the external object. However, the mental image so created is not free from the blemishes and faults of the original, such as marks of dirt or scratches. In the mentally-created image, these will be like smoke or clouds in the sky, though its appearance will naturally vary according to the nature of the original. The level of concentration gained by means of both these *nimittas* (*parikamma-nimitta* and *uggaha-nimitta*) is termed "*parikamma-samādhi*", "preliminary concentration", and it is obtained with all subjects of meditation.

After continued practice of meditation, the meditator finds that his power of concentration has intensified. Thereupon, the acquired image (*uggaha-nimitta*) gives way to an abstract image (*paññatti*[30]); this "abstract image" is now totally divested of any phenomenal reality and free from all the blemishes and faults of the original object of concentration — it has become a "sublimated image", which, nonetheless, still embodies the quality of objectivity. This image, which no longer appears to the mind as a concrete object, is termed "*paṭibhāga-nimitta*", "counterpart image, or sign", "after-image".

When the *paṭibhāga-nimitta* appears, the meditator has reached the degree of concentration known as *upacāra-samādhi*, "neighborhood concentration", or "access concentration", which is deeper than that of the *parikamma-samādhi* and approaching

[30] Also spelled *paṇṇatti*, "making known, manifestation, description, designation, name, idea, notion, concept".

ever nearer to the state of absorption (*jhāna*). But the *Visuddhimagga* (1, 113) states that the *paṭibhāga-nimitta* arises only from the image acquired from meditation on the ten *kasiṇas* (external "device"), the ten *asubhas* ("cemetery contemplations"), *ānāpāna-sati* ("mindfulness of breathing"[31]), and *kāya-gatā-sati* ("mindfulness with regard to the body"), and that it is more refined and purer than the *uggaha-nimitta* from which it arises. *Paṭibhāga* literally means "equivalent", "similar", or "resembling", and it is applied to this after-image in the sense that this represents the abstract idea, or image, derived from the *uggaha-nimitta*, "acquired image". Continued concentration on the *paṭibhāga-nimitta* leads to *appanā-samādhi*, "attainment concentration". Attainment concentration is that level of concentration that is present during the *jhānas*.

Thus, these three *nimittas* (*parikamma-nimitta*, *uggaha-nimitta*, and *paṭibhāga-nimitta*) are the objects (*ārammaṇa*) of the three stages of concentration (*samādhi*): (1) *parikamma-samādhi*, "preliminary concentration"; (2) *upacāra-samādhi*, "access" or "neighborhood concentration"; and (3) *appanā-samādhi*, "attainment concentration".

These are the most important terms that should be noted in connection with the doctrine of Buddhist meditation. There are, however, many other technical terms used to express the results, attainments, and different schemes of meditation, such as *abhiññā*, "supernormal powers"; *samāpatti*, "attainment"; *vimokkha*, "release", or "liberation"; *abhibhāyatana*, "object of mastery"; etc. These will be dealt with in due course.

It should be noted that, for the sake of clarity, we shall make use of the Pāḷi terms, with or without their English translation, as the subject matter requires. ■

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[31] *Ānāpāna-sati* is the most subtle and difficult subject of meditation and is not suitable for a person whose powers of memory and concentration are poor. Consequently, it requires complete mindfulness and quick understanding. The meditator should always keep his attention focused at the point that comes into contact with the breaths — usually, this is the nostrils or the tip of the nose. As he thus practices, in due course, the *paṭibhāga-nimitta* will appear. Its manner of appearance varies according to the type of mentality. To some, it appears with a soft touch, like a piece of cotton or a cooling breeze; to others, like a star, a round ruby, or a pearl; to others, again, it seems like the harsh contact of a pointed stick; others feel it as a long string or a wreath of white flowers or a crest of smoke; to others, it is like a cobweb, a cloud, a lotus flower, a wheel, or a disk of the sun or the moon. As he continues to practice, the meditator should closely observe the *paṭibhāga-nimitta* and, withdrawing his attention from the tip of the nose, should mentally place the *paṭibhāga-nimitta* in his heart and then in his navel. Finally, he should place it in his nostrils.

4

Jhāna and Samādhi

Since each of the technical terms used in the Buddhist system of meditation can be applied to the whole work of mental training, a comprehensive expression of the entire system is included in the words *jhāna* and *samādhi*. These terms, which, from their usage in the Pāḷi scriptures are often very abstruse, need amplification. It seems well to add a survey of them here, which will include both their canonical and commentarial interpretation.

1. Jhāna

The word *jhāna*, which corresponds to the Sanskrit *dhyāna*, has a wider meaning than *samādhi*. It implies essentially "contemplation", or "meditation", and, in its Buddhist usage, embraces not only that extensive system of mental development but also the process of transmuting the lower states of consciousness into the higher states, from the fine material, or form, worlds (*rūpāvacara*[32]), through the immaterial, or formless, worlds (*arūpāvacara*), to the peak of progress in religious training.

According to its canonical usage and commentarial exposition, the word *jhāna* has two possible meanings. On the one hand, it means "to contemplate (a given object)", or "to examine closely (the characteristics of phenomenal existence)". On the other hand, it means "to eliminate (the hindrances, or lower mental elements)", which are detrimental to higher progress. In the latter usage, the word *jhāna* is connected by the Buddhist commentators with the verb *jhāpeti*, "to burn". Nowadays, however, the word *jhāna* is more generally accepted in the former sense, that of "meditation", and both the Pāḷi term *jhāna* and its Sanskrit equivalent, *dhyāna*, are used to denote the system of meditation.

As we have already seen, the formula given in the *Nikāyas*, as, for example, in the Sāmaññaphala Sutta, attributes to *jhāna* the five psychological factors *vitakka* ("initial application"), *vicāra* ("sustained application"), *pīti* ("rapture, ecstasy, zest"), *sukha* ("happiness"), and *ekaggatā* ("one-pointedness"), which are induced by the elimination of the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*). It should therefore be noted that there is no *jhāna* apart from these five factors, which raise consciousness from normal sensory experience to a

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[32] *Avacara* means "sphere, realm, world". The three spheres of existence are: (1) *kāmāvacara* (*kāma* + *avacara*), the sensory world; (2) *rūpāvacara* (*rūpa* + *avacara*), the fine material, or form world; and (3) *arūpāvacara* (*arūpa* + *avacara*), the immaterial, or formless world.

higher level of purity. The consciousness associated with these five factors is, through their intrinsic nature, named "*jhāna*".

In the ordinary state of mind, these psychological factors may appear occasionally as the common elements of logical processes. But, then, they arise as the conditions of the complex state of sensory emotion and, hence, do not correspond to *jhāna*, which is to be attained, as the formula emphasizes, by the attenuation of sense desires and evil thoughts.

The mind that lusts after sensory stimuli is not, and cannot be, concentrated upon an object of a salutary nature. It does not enter upon the path of progress that leads to release from sensory emotions, and the mind that is harassed by ill will cannot proceed at once towards one-pointedness. The mind that is submerged in sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*) is not fit for intensive mental work. Obsessed by worry, remorse, distraction, and agitation, the mind does not repose, but wanders. Struck by perplexity and doubt, it does not even approach the path that leads to the attainment of the *jhāna* state. Thus, these five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) — (1) sense desire; (2) ill will; (3) sloth and torpor; (4) distraction and agitation; and (5) skeptical doubt — are inimical to *jhāna*. Such hindrances must be eliminated by the systematic practice of the contemplative exercises. Thus, we find: "Putting away covetousness for worldly things, one abides with one's thoughts free from covetousness, etc." (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 75).

Of the five constituent factors of *jhāna*, *vitakka* is the "initial mental application" of the mind and its concomitants upon the object of concentration. Specifically, it means the "right thinking" (*sammā saṁkappa*) that eliminates sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*) (*Vibhanga* 257).

Vicāra, which means the "sustained mental application" of the mind upon the same object of concentration with a view to "investigation" (*anupekkhanatā*), keeps the mind continually engaged in the exercise, and, thereby, doubt (*vicikicchā*) is removed.

Pīti, "rapture (ecstasy, zest)", arising in opposition to ill will (*vyāpāda*), brings about, by degrees, an expansion of interest in the same object of concentration. It is subdivided in the Commentaries (*Visuddhimagga* 1, 43; *Atthasālinī* 115) into five: (1) *khuddakā pīti*, "a slight, or immature, sense of interest"; (2) *khaṇikā pīti*, "growing interest, momentarily keener"; (3) *okkantikā pīti*, "absorbing interest"; (4) *ubbegā pīti*, "an interest rising to a thrilling point"; and (5) *pharaṇā pīti*, "fully developed, intensive rapture (ecstasy, zest)", which infuses the whole being of the body and mind. It is the last stage that is implied in the *jhāna* formula; it is associated with an intense state of concentration.

Sukha, or "pleasurable, reposeful, happy feeling", which is invariably a result of this diffused rapture (*pīti*), expels distraction and agitation (*uddhacca-kukkucca*) and leads the mind to concentration. "The mind of one who is happy becomes concentrated" (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 75; etc.).

Finally, concentration, being thus intensified by the other four constituent factors, is distinguished by one-pointedness of mind (*ekaggatā*) alone, with the expulsion of sense desire (*kāmacchanda*). As long as the hindrances are present, the meditator cannot

reach either access (neighborhood) concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) or full (attainment) concentration (*appanā samādhi*) and is unable to discern the truth (*sacca*).

2. The Fourfold Divisions of Jhāna

When these five constituent factors of *jhāna* arise in the mind, thus eliminating the five hindrances, the first stage of *jhāna* is attained. This *jhāna*, being the transition of consciousness from the realm of sense objects, is said to be the escape from desires: "This is the escape from sense desire, this is the way out" (*Dīgha Nikāya*, III, 275). The *Buddha* is said to have attained this first level of *jhāna* even in His childhood, and this *jhāna* was His entry into the path of enlightenment (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 246). When this *jhāna* is attained for the first time, the consciousness has passed beyond all lower impulse and emotion caused by external objects and is opposed to the lust of sense desire. The mind becomes self-possessed, since it is established in inward serenity and unshaken by sensory stimuli. The *jhāyin* ("meditator") experiences a new life, a new vision, a valuable reward for his effort, unlike anything he has ever experienced before. His whole being is suffused with indescribable joy and happiness — as stated in the *Dīgha Nikāya* (I, 73): "There is nothing in his body untouched by the rapture and happiness born of inward solitude."

This is the first attainment in the course of the development of contemplation, and it is also the preliminary step to the entry into the other states of *jhāna*. Hence, it is called the "first *jhāna*" (*paṭhamajjhāna*). The five factors, which form the process of thinking upon the object and the burning of states opposite in character (the hindrances), are explicitly called "*jhānanga*", or "constituent factors". The consciousness associated with them is the moral consciousness of the form world (*rūpāvacara*). It is so called because the *jhāyin*, when in this state of consciousness, takes rebirth in the corresponding *rūpa* world, Brahmaloka, where there are no sensory objects giving rise to lust (*kāma*).

It should be noted here that, among the five factors of the first *jhāna*, *ekaggatā* does not appear as such in the formula given in the *Nikāyas*. But, that it is a factor is revealed in the discussion between the Elders Sāriputta and Mahākoṭṭhita (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 294), where the first *jhāna* is said to contain five parts, the fifth being *ekaggatā*, "one-pointedness of mind". It is also stated in the *Vibhanga* (p. 257): "*Jhāna* is *vitakka*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, and *citass'ekaggatā*." Buddhaghosa Thera, commenting thereon, says: "Whatever may have been the intention of the *Buddha* in making the outline (the *suttanta* formula), it is thus revealed in the *Vibhanga*" (*Visuddhimagga* 1, 14).

3. Higher Jhāna

The systematic elimination of the factors present in the first *jhāna* produces the higher stages of *jhāna*, intensifying it at each stage. The *jhāyin* who has just attained the first *jhāna*, through continuous practice, fixes his attention upon the same sign (*nimitta*)

derived, for example, from a *kasiṇa* device or upon any other given subject of meditation and practices this repeatedly in order to make it habitual in his mind. This practice is known as "*vasī*", or "*vasitā*",[33] "mastery", and it is fivefold (*Visuddhimagga* IV): (1) reflecting upon, or adverting to, it (*āvajjanā*); (2) entering into it (*samāpajjanā*); (3) establishing, or determining, it (*adhiṭṭhāna*); (4) rising therefrom (*vuṭṭhāna*); and (5) reviewing it, or retrospection (*paccavekkhanā*). In the practice of this supplementary method of the training of *jhāna* in these five ways, the *jhāyin* acquires the ability to reflect upon the first *jhāna* just attained or upon one of its five factors, wherever and whenever he pleases, and for as long as he pleases, without sluggishness while reflecting. When he becomes able to direct his mind immediately to the five *jhāna* factors, then, the habit of reflection (*āvajjana-vasitā*) is established. In the same way, the ability to enter into the state of *jhāna*, to remain in it for as long as he wishes, to rise from it whenever he wishes, and to review or recollect it, must be acquired.

He who is well versed in these five ways rises from the first *jhāna*, after his practice of it has been perfected, and realizes the weakness inherent therein: "This *jhāna* has the service of *vitakka* and *vicāra*, which have a near enemy in the hindrances. It is not entirely calm, for it still has waves of attentive, sustained thinking." He sees that their absence would result in greater calm. Then, giving up his attachment to the first *jhāna*, he strives to attain the second *jhāna* by dispensing with *vitakka* and *vicāra*. In the course of practice, his mind rises in rapture (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*), and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*), which constitute the second *jhāna*, born of concentration, tranquility, and developed exaltation of mind. Thus, the simultaneous elimination of *vitakka* and *vicāra* gives rise to the second *jhāna*, which is born of *ekodibhāva*, "supreme exaltation". Although the first *jhāna* is associated with concentration, it is the second *jhāna* that is worthy of being called "concentration" (*samādhi*), because of its freedom from disturbing qualities (the hindrances as well as *vitakka* and *vicāra*) — it is "unshakable", since it is well established.

When the second *jhāna* is thus attained, the *jhāyin* must be well practiced in the fivefold mastery (*vasitā*), as was discussed above, and, rising from the second *jhāna*, when it has been perfected, he perceives the faults therein: "This *jhāna* has a near enemy in *vitakka* and *vicāra*. It is weakened by the emotion of rapture (*pīti*), which is a perturbed condition of mind." He then strives to attain the third *jhāna*, because of its calmness, and ceases to hanker after the second. When he repeats his meditation, as he has done before, the third *jhāna* arises, devoid of rapture (*pīti*), but with happiness (*sukha*) and concentration (*samādhi*). He abides therein with equanimity and mindfulness, maintaining the process of mental flux in a well balanced state. This is the most blissful state of happiness, exceedingly sweet, for it is free from even the slightest disturbance. There is no bliss belonging to the aggregate of feelings (*vedanā*) greater than this. A person who has attained this state of *jhāna* is said to be happy (*sukhavihārī*). But, owing to the presence of mindfulness and awareness, there is no longing for this bliss, nor is there any change in the mind of the *jhāyin*.

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[33] Sanskrit *vaśitā*, "power, control, mastery".

When he has become thoroughly acquainted with this *jhāna*, the *jhāyin* perceives that even this state has its weakness, for it has a near enemy in rapture, and, owing to the gross nature of happiness, it is unstable. Giving up all hankering after this *jhāna*, he strives to attain the fourth *jhāna* because of its calmness and stability. He continues his concentration upon the same object (namely, the mental image derived from an object such as one of the *kasiṇas*) in order to pass beyond the gross factors and attain perfect calmness. Thereupon, the fourth *jhāna* arises, accompanied by a neutral state of feeling in regard to his body and mind and by pure mindfulness born of equanimity (*upekkhā*). In this fourth *jhāna*, there ensues that mental emancipation (*cetovimutti*) that is a neutral feeling (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 296). In this state, the *jhāyin* experiences neither bodily pain nor happiness, neither mental pain nor pleasure. He has now neutralized individuality, and he is far removed from lust (*kāma*) and hatred (*vyāpāda*), since their cause, namely, discrimination between pleasant and unpleasant, is now destroyed.

In this fourth stage of *jhāna*, consciousness is associated with perfect mindfulness (*sati*) and steadfast equanimity (*upekkhā*), free from all attachment to the world of the senses and to the three lower stages of *jhāna*. All of the activities of the lower mind are completely arrested, and the current of the mental flow towards sensation is checked. But, the *jhāyin* who has attained this *jhāna* consciousness is not by any means in a state of hypnotic trance, or subconscious state produced by auto-suggestion, or, as it were, in a cataleptic condition. On the contrary, his mind is concentrated and mindful of the object upon which his mind is concentrated, free from all mental disturbances, gross and subtle, having eliminated every kind of activity, both bodily and mental. As said in the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (IV, 217): "In the first *jhāna* stage, the *jhāyin* is free from speech; for the innermost silence is manifested after the five hindrances are gone. In the second *jhāna*, he is free from *vitakka* ('initial application') and *vicāra* ('sustained application'), which are called '*vacī saṁkhāra*', or the 'faculty of uttering words'. In the third *jhāna*, he is free from the emotion of rapture (*pīti*), and, in the fourth *jhāna*, he is free from breathing in and out (*assāsapassāsa*), which is called '*kāya saṁkhāra*', or 'manifestation of the motion, or the vital current, of the body' (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 301; *Saṁyutta Nikāya* IV, 293; *Yamaka* I, 229). Thus, with perfect stillness of body and mind, he abides visualizing the condition within himself." (*Anguttara Nikāya* V, 209).

The residual content of the fourth *jhāna* consciousness, which is dominated by mental clarity and purity, the result of perfect equanimity and mindfulness, gives rise to inward vision, or intuition. This *jhāna*, therefore, is specially called "*pādaka*",[34] or "basic *jhāna*", in the Commentaries, for, in this state, the *jhāyin* is apt and fit for clairvoyance and clairaudience and other supernormal attainments, and it leads to the point at which the taints (*āsava*) finally cease. These four stages, which involve the

[34] *Pādakajjhāna*, "basic absorption", "foundation-forming absorption", is a *jhāna* used as a foundation, or starting point, for the higher spiritual powers (*abhiññā*) or for insight (*vipassanā*) leading to the four stages of sainthood (*ariya-puggala*). The foundation for the higher spiritual powers is the fourth fine material absorption (*rūpajjhāna*). For insight, however, any absorption is suitable. Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), p. 141.

gradual elimination of the factors of weakness in the mind and the gradual transition from a lower state to a higher, are to be understood and embraced by the term "*jhāna*".

4. The Fivefold System

In the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* (*Dhammasangaṇī* 160—175), there is a fivefold division of *jhāna*, which is supplementary to the fourfold division found in the discourses of the *Sutta Piṭaka*. In the fivefold *jhāna* system, *vitakka* ("initial application") and *vicāra* ("sustained application") are separated. Each is eliminated in successive stages instead of together, as in the fourfold system. Whereas, in the fourfold system, the second *jhāna* is attained by the simultaneous elimination of *vitakka* and *vicāra*, and thus retains three factors, in the fivefold system, the elimination of *vitakka* produces a second *jhāna* of four factors (*vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, and *ekaggatā*). With the elimination of *vicāra*, the third *jhāna* is attained in the fivefold system. The fourth *jhāna* state in the fivefold system is identical to the third in the fourfold system, while the last *jhāna* state is the same in both. Herein lies the difference between the two systems.

According to the Commentary, this was an optional teaching, varying with the particular mental disposition of the meditator. To some, in reviewing the first *jhāna*, *vitakka* is the first factor to appear gross, while the other four seem calm. To such a one, the Teacher formulated a second *jhāna* with four factors, that is, without *vitakka*, but with *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, and *ekaggatā*.

Furthermore, the *Buddha* expounded three kinds of *samādhi* in the *suttas*: "*Bhikkhus*, the three kinds of *samādhi* are: (1) *samādhi* with *vitakka* and *vicāra*; (2) *samādhi* without *vitakka* and with *vicāra* only; and (3) *samādhi* without *vitakka* and without *vicāra*" (*Anguttara Nikāya* I, 299, and IV, 310; *Saṁyutta Nikāya* IV, 360 and 363; and *Kathāvatthu* 413). Of these, the first and third are given in the fourfold *jhāna* system, but not the second. It should be understood that the fivefold system was devised to account for the *samādhi* that has *vicāra* but not *vitakka* (*Atthasālinī* 179).

Advancing further, there is also a system of fourfold formless, or immaterial, absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*). Thus, the divisions of *jhāna* are extended to eight, as will be seen in the next chapter.

5. Samādhi

As we have already seen, *samādhi* can be defined as "*cittassa ekaggatā*", "one-pointedness of mind", and this is the regular definition given in the *Nikāyas*. In the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, this definition is further elaborated, and *samādhi* is described as the dominant mental factor in that process of the elimination of sensory impressions from the mind, which, in its cultivated and developed form, is termed "concentration"; that is to say, the "*samādhi*" that occurs in the higher types of consciousness.

According to the explanations given in the Commentaries, *samādhi*, in its general characteristic, is regarded as twofold: (1) the concentration, or collectedness, of any kind of pure and skillful thought (*kusala cittekaggatā*) and (2) the concentration that is transmuted into the jhānic states. The former generally implies collectedness, in the sense of the concentration of the mind upon a single object, which must always be of a wholesome (*kusala*) nature. The latter signifies the supernormal state of the same consciousness, which has passed from the ordinary state to absorption (*jhāna*), and this is what is actually implied by "*samādhi*" in any discussion of Buddhist meditation.

In the psychological analysis found in the *Abhidhamma*, there occurs a mental factor (*cetasika*) known as "*ekaggatā*", "one-pointedness", or "concentration of the mental concomitants", which is common to all states of consciousness, pure or impure. With this in mind, Buddhaghosa Thera adds the word "*kusala*" to the definition of "*cittekaggatā*" given in the *samādhi* system in order to restrict its wide interpretation and confine it to *samādhi* itself. It is, therefore, true to say that *samādhi* never arises during the process of sensory cognition or in association with an evil thought, whereas the factor of one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*) is common to both pure and impure, or good and evil, states of consciousness. To the Buddhist, then, the term "*samādhi*" is always applied to the one-pointedness of mind (*cittekaggatā*) that is obtained by "thinking wisely" or by means of "careful attention" (*yoniso manasikāra*). It is the awareness of one object, and only one, and that, too, of a wholesome nature. In the Buddhist system of mental training (*bhāvanā*), this is to be attained by the practice of concentration upon one of the subjects designed for that purpose.

From a psychological point of view, *samādhi* is regarded as the positive and most active factor of the spiritually developed mind, for it must always include the virtues of morality (*sīla*), universal loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), etc., and is associated with the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiya-dhammā*). Thus, *samādhi* is opposed to all passive, inactive states of mind, which are considered inimical and capable of being a hindrance to self-development. It is only through the power of *samādhi* that the mind becomes apt, fit, and ready to work for higher knowledge and psychic powers, and the cultivation of *samādhi* is, therefore, an essential preliminary to the attainment of spiritual maturity and full knowledge.

In summary, *samādhi* means "concentration" in the sense of "putting together", or "placing" (*saṁ-ā-dhā-*), that is, "fixing, or establishing, the mind and thoughts upon one object". Hence, *samādhi* means that mental state in which the mind and thoughts are well established and centered upon one object, and only one, free from all traces of wavering and distraction.

6. Characteristics, Function, Manifestation, and Results of Samādhi

The characteristic of *samādhi* to which all moral states tend is non-distraction. *Samādhi* exercises a control over sensory disturbances, or stimuli, and rids the mind of distractions.

In its function, or fundamental nature, therefore, *samādhi* is a power that destroys all tendency to wavering and the habit of pursuing mental fantasies that will either attract with their pleasantness or (as in the case of remorse) prove distracting. Thus, *samādhi* may be considered as an "active faculty" (*indriya*) of mind in that it controls emotional impulses and excitement.

It is a manifestation of the pliable energy of the mind unshaken by agitation, for the immediate results of *samādhi* are imperturbability of mind and clear vision, penetrating into the object of concentration. When the mind has attained this state, it remains free from all wavering due to external stimuli, and the flow of the manifold current of mixed thoughts is calmed. Furthermore, *samādhi* cleanses the mind by eliminating all mental defilements (*kilesa*), so that, like a polished mirror that gives a clear reflection, the mind radiates its own inner light to see and to realize things "as they really are".

Moreover, ease and happiness of mind and body are the natural results of *samādhi* and arise through the calming exercises of meditation.

7. Classification of Samādhi in Its Various Aspects

The following account of *samādhi* in its various aspects is based upon the exposition given in the *Visuddhimagga*:

1. *Samādhi* signifies the concentration of the mind upon one object, generally speaking, and its chief characteristic is freedom from wavering. But, it also has a very wide connotation, embracing, as it does, the whole system of mental development (*bhāvanā*) produced by the intensification of concentration.

2. Twofold *samādhi*:

    a. As induced by and in the course of gradually developing meditation, *samādhi* is twofold: (1) *upacāra samādhi* and (2) *appanā samādhi*.

    Upacāra samādhi is best rendered in English as "access concentration", or "neighborhood concentration". Literally, *upacāra* means "approaching near", specifically, approaching near to the state of *jhāna*, that is, when concentration is just beginning to become intense or approaching *jhāna*. It is, so to speak, one step behind *appanā* and is ranked as *kāmāvacara*, or "of a sensory nature". But, when associated with the more exalted forms of meditation, such as *Buddhānussati*, "recollection of the Enlightened One", etc., it is associated with *jhāna* and is on the threshold of *rūpāvacara*, or the "consciousness belonging to the fine-material, or form, world". In the preliminary stage, *upacāra samādhi* can be induced by every type of meditation.

Appanā samādhi, "attainment concentration", is a term applied to that *samādhi* that is associated with the jhānic factors and that systematically develops into the fourth *rūpajjhāna*. It is also associated with the formless absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*) as well as the transcendental (*lokuttara*) states. Literally, it means "the fixing together", or "the mounting to", a jhānic state. In this stage of *samādhi*, the mind and the object of concentration are melded. The consciousness is transformed by *samādhi* into the state of *jhāna*, and all connections with sensory relations, or sense objects, are severed. That is to say, it checks all the usual currents of the ordinary mind so that, for the first time, the *jhāyin* experiences a new and inexpressible serenity and possesses clear mental vision. This follows immediately upon the preliminary practice of the first *jhāna*. Thus, it is said: "The preparatory exercise for the first *jhāna* becomes the immediate cause that induces the first *jhāna*." It should be noted that *appanā samādhi* is always identical with *jhāna*, since it is its adoption and is attainable only by concentration upon those subjects that are designed for inducing *jhāna*. It is this twofold *samādhi* that is also to be induced by various methods of meditation, and the distinction between the two stages is principally upon the degree of intensity and the psychological effects of the particular subjects selected by the *jhāyin* for meditation. The terms *upacāra* and *appanā* are found only in the Commentaries when used to designate the two stages of *samādhi*. The word "*appanā*" is found in the *Dhammasanganī* as an equivalent of *vitakka*, in the sense of "mounting" to the object. It is probable that the commentators adopted this word to express the process of the transmutation of *samādhi* into the jhānic state.

b. *Samādhi* is also twofold in accordance with the resulting states and their position: *lokiya*, "mundane", and *lokuttara*, "supramundane". The former is associated with the moral consciousness in the three planes: (1) the sensory plane; (2) the form, or fine material, plane; and (3) the formless, or immaterial, plane. The latter is associated with the Noble Path leading to *nibbāna*.

c. *Samādhi* is twofold in regard to its associated qualities in the state of *jhāna*: in the first two *jhānas* of the fourfold system and the first three *jhānas* of the fivefold system, *samādhi* arises with rapture (*pīti*). In the remaining two *jhānas* of both systems, it is dissociated from *pīti*. Thus, it is of two kinds: (1) *sappītika*, "with *pīti*", and (2) *nippītika*, "without *pīti*".

d. Furthermore, *samādhi* is also twofold in the state of *jhāna*. In the first three *jhānas* of the fourfold system and in the first four *jhānas* of the fivefold system, it is associated with happiness (*sukha*). In the remaining *jhāna* of both systems, it is accompanied (*sahagata*) by equanimity (*upekkhā*).

3. Threefold *samādhi*:

a. *Samādhi* may further be classified according to the degree of its intensity. It is then regarded as threefold, for it is divided into (1) that which is inferior (*hīna*), since it is but recently attained, (2) that which is of medium intensity (*majjhima*), seeing that it is not yet fully developed, and (3) that which is superior (*paṇīta*), because it is now fully developed.
b. *Samādhi* may also be regarded as threefold when account is taken of the varying number of jhānic factors presented in its successive stages. The *samādhi* of the first *rūpajjhāna* and also *upacāra samādhi* is associated with initial application and sustained application (*savitakka savicāra*). In the second *jhāna* of the fivefold system, *samādhi* is no longer associated with initial application, but with sustained application only (*avitakka vicāramatta*). In the last three *jhānas* of both systems, *samādhi* is dissociated from both initial application and sustained application (*avitakka avicāra*).
c. In the first two *jhānas* of the fourfold system, *samādhi* is accompanied by rapture (*pītisahagata*), while the *samādhi* in the third *jhāna* of the fourfold system and in the fourth *jhāna* of the fivefold system is accompanied by happiness (*sukha-sahagata*). In the remaining *jhāna*, it is associated with equanimity (*upekkhā-sahagata*). *Upacāra samādhi* is associated either with rapture (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*), or equanimity (*upekkhā*). Thus, in consideration of the varying factors that may accompany it, *samādhi* may be regarded as threefold.
d. In the state of *upacāra samādhi*, or "access concentration", *samādhi* is weak, or limited. In the state of higher consciousness connected with the two realms of fine material absorption (*rūpajjhāna*) and immaterial absorption (*arūpajjhāna*), *samādhi* is great and sublime — *mahāggata* ("grown great"). The *samādhi* associated with the Noble Path is termed "immeasurable" (*appamāṇa*[35] *samādhi*). Thus, we have a further threefold classification as (1) weak, or limited, (2) great and sublime, and (3) immeasurable.

4. Fourfold *samādhi*:

   a. It is natural that the capacity of individuals for attaining *samādhi* will vary, and their achievements have been grouped under four headings, giving a fourfold classification, as follows:

      i. That which is obtained by painful practice (*dukkhā paṭipadā*) and slow insight (*dandhābhiññā*);
      ii. That which is obtained by painful practice and quick insight (*khippābhiññā*);
      iii. That which is obtained by easy practice (*sukhā paṭipadā*) and slow insight;

[35] Also spelled *appamāna*, "without measure, immeasurable, endless, boundless, unlimited, unrestricted, all-permeating".

iv. That which is obtained by easy practice and quick insight.

In this connection, the process of *samādhi* meditation, viewed from the beginning, continuing through the stage of *upacāra*, and culminating in the different *jhānas*, is united under the term "*paṭipadā*", "practice", or "progress". The knowledge (*paññā*) that proceeds from *upacāra* up to the stage of *appanā*, or the "attainment" of *jhāna*, is called "*abhiññā*", "higher knowledge".

The preliminaries of meditational practice may prove to be painful and difficult for some individuals, owing to the abundance of states diametrically opposed to it, such as the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) or various other undesirable associations that may arise. In this case, the meditator feels that it will be difficult or unpleasant to proceed, for a strenuous effort has to be made to overcome this opposition. To others, there being no such opposition, progress (*paṭipadā*) comes easily. For others, intuitive knowledge comes slowly and is weak and sluggish. To yet others, it is quick, sharp, and steady in its approach.

The following expresses this distinction more clearly: For those who start meditation in undesirable (*assappāya*) surroundings, or without accomplishing the preliminary preparation, such as the "cutting off" of the impediments, progress is painful, and intuition is sluggish. Those who pursue that which is favorable and have concluded their preliminary training find progress easy and intuition swift. Further, in those who are not perfectly skilled in attainment (*appanā*), intuition is sluggish. In those who are perfectly skilled, it is quick. To those who are overcome by craving (*taṇhā*), progress is painful. To those who are free from such craving, progress comes easily. To those submerged in ignorance (*avijjā*), higher knowledge (*abhiññā*) proves sluggish. For those who have not previously accustomed themselves to the practice of concentration (*samādhi*), progress is difficult. For those experienced in the practice, progress is easy. In a similar manner, those who have had no previous experience in the development of insight (*vipassanā*) are slow to develop intuition, while those who have such previous experience develop it quickly.

The capacity of practitioners for meditational practice and for the development of higher knowledge will also depend upon the state of their passions, whether strong or weak, and upon the influence exerted by their mental and moral qualities. For those who are full of passion and whose faculties, such as faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and knowledge are still in an undeveloped state, progress is difficult, and higher knowledge is sluggish. But, to those of keen faculties, intuition is quick. To those whose passions are less, but whose faculties are undeveloped, progress is easy, and higher knowledge is slow. For those of keen faculties, higher knowledge is quick.

Thus, according to whether the growth and progress of intuition and higher knowledge is slow or rapid, *samādhi* may be divided into four kinds.

b. There is another way in which *samādhi* may be divided into four, namely:

   i. That which is limited and has a limited object (*paritta parittārammaṇa*);
   ii. That which is limited and has an infinite object (*paritta appamāṇārammaṇa*);
   iii. That which is infinite and has a limited object (*appamāṇa parittārammaṇa*);
   iv. That which is infinite and has an infinite object (*appamāṇa appamāṇārammaṇa*).

   Of these, the *samādhi* that is not developed and does not lead to the next higher stage of *jhāna* is "limited". That which proceeds without an extension of object is with a "limited object". That which is fit, well developed, and able to induce *jhāna* is "infinite". That which proceeds with an extensive object is "with an infinite object". The varying combinations of these characteristics of *samādhi* produce the fourfold division given above.

   This classification is based upon the distinctive type of the mental image drawn from a physical or mental subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*). The mental image upon which the mind is concentrated is one of two types, "finite" (*paritta*) or "infinite" (*appamāṇa*). That which is not identified with the universal quality and is confined only to the individual subject is "finite", while that which is not thus limited is "infinite".

c. Moreover, *samādhi* is fourfold in consideration of the four *jhāna* states, that is, according to whether it is the *samādhi* of the first, second, third, or fourth *jhāna*. Of these, the *samādhi* of the first *jhāna* has five factors: (1) initial application (*vitakka*); (2) sustained application (*vicāra*); (3) rapture (*pīti*); (4) happiness (*sukha*); and (5) one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*), which are all free from the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) — it is called "*paṭhamajjhānanga*", "constituent factors of the first *jhāna*". The second has three factors, initial application and sustained application having been eliminated — it is called "*dutiyajjhānanga*", "constituent factors of the second *jhāna*". The third has two factors, rapture having been eliminated — it is called "*tatiyajjhānanga*", "constituent factors of the third *jhāna*". The fourth, which transcends happiness, has one factor, namely, one-pointedness together with equanimity — it is called "*catutthajjhānanga*", "constituent factors of the fourth *jhāna*".

d. Likewise, *samādhi* is fourfold:

   i. That which tends to decline (*hānabhāgiya*);
   ii. That which tends to be stable (*ṭhitibhāgiya*);
   iii. That which leads to distinction (*visesabhāgiya*);
   iv. That which leads to knowledge (*nibbedhabhāgiya*).

Of these, the first owes its decline to the frequent arising of sensory ideas whose nature is entirely opposed to that of the subject of meditation. The stability of the second is due to the establishment of mindfulness, which is in conformity with meditation. The *samādhi* that leads to distinction, or special advantage, is the result of the attainment of a higher state. Finally, that which leads to knowledge is associated with thoughts of detachment and release.

This classification is based upon the following account of the *jhāna* states that is given in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I, 35—36), quoted in the *Visuddhimagga* (1, 88).

> *When sensory perception and thoughts (saññā manasikārā) of a sensory nature persistently arise in one who has attained the first jhāna, [one's] paññā [associated with samādhi] declines. When the mindfulness in conformity with that [the first jhāna] state stands established, paññā tends to be stable. When perceptions and thoughts dissociated from initial application (avitakka) arise [in the state of the second jhāna], then paññā is leading to distinction. When perceptions and thoughts of revulsion associated with detachment (virāgupasaṁhitā) arise [in the state of vipassanā], paññā is leading to release.*

e. Four kinds of *samādhi* are also distinguished, each of which is associated with a different state:

   i. Belonging to the realm of sense (*kāmāvacara*);
   ii. Belonging to the realm of form (*rūpāvacara*);
   iii. Belonging to the realm of the formless (*arūpāvacara*);
   iv. Not belonging to any of these three realms (*apariyāpanna*).

   Of these, *upacāra samādhi*, or "access concentration", is *kāmāvacara*, and the remaining three are *appanā samādhi*, "attainment concentration", associated, respectively, with the moral consciousness of form, of the formless, and of the transcendental (*lokuttara*).

f. According to whether the influence of one of the four bases of psychic power (*iddhi*) is predominant, *samādhi* may be regarded as fourfold:

   i. That which is attained by the dominant influence of will (*chandādhipati*);
   ii. That which is attained by the dominant influence of energy (*viriyādhipati*);
   iii. That which is attained by the dominant influence of thought (*cittādhipati*);
   iv. That which is attained by the dominant influence of investigation (*vīmaṁsā-dhipati*).

Reference is made to this division in the following passage in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* (*Vibhanga* 216—219):

> *If a Monk (Bhikkhu), making will (chanda) [his] dominant influence, attains concentration, attains collectiveness of mind, this is called "chanda-samādhi" [concentration attained by willpower]. If a Monk, making energy (viriya) [his] dominant influence, attains concentration, attains collectiveness of mind, this is called "viriya-samādhi" [concentration attained by the power of energy]. If a Monk, making mind (citta) [his] dominant influence, attains concentration, attains collectiveness of mind, this is called "citta-samādhi" [concentration attained by the power of mind]. If a Monk, making investigation (vīmaṁsā) [his] dominant influence, attains concentration, attains collectiveness of mind, this is called "vīmaṁsā-samādhi" [concentration attained by the power of investigative knowledge].*

Thus, *samādhi* is of four kinds, depending upon the predominant influence.

5. Fivefold *samādhi*: In this method of classification, *samādhi* is divided into five types, in accordance with the five *jhānas* of the fivefold system, as "*paṭhama-jjhānanga samādhi*", "the *samādhi* of the constituent factors of the first *jhāna*", etc. This division is based upon the optional teaching of the fivefold *jhāna* system that appears in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, as discussed above.

Besides these, there are several other classifications of *samādhi* given in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (pp. 48—49), in the order of one to ten, and including fifty-five divisions of *samādhi* and twenty-five distinct meanings of the term. They vary according to the nature of the different subjects of meditation and the various stages of development, which will themselves be explained in the discussion of the practice and methods of attaining *samādhi*. ■

5

The Subjects and Methods Of Meditation

In the preceding chapters, the doctrine of meditation has been expounded in accordance with what is found in the scriptures.

The main purpose of this system of mental training is to purify the mind from all defilements, corruptions, and negativities in order to cultivate its intrinsic pliability, so that perfect knowledge may be attained, which is the means of transcending the states of woe and sorrow.

Furthermore, the mental training specified in Buddhism is training in higher thought, in lofty ideals of concentration of the mind upon some object of a moral and virtuous nature. The mind that is wholly given to a single perception of a salutary kind gradually accedes to its original state of pure luminosity (*Anguttara Nikāya* I, 8).

> *"The mind, O Monks, is luminous, but it is corrupted by adventitious defilements. The uninstructed worldling does not understand this as it really is; therefore, for him, there is no mental development.*
>
> *"The mind, O Monks, is luminous, and it can be freed from adventitious defilements. The instructed noble disciple understands this as it really is; therefore, for him, there is mental development."*

In the very beginning, therefore, it is essential to focus attention upon an object (*ārammaṇa*) entirely dissociated from the passions in order to draw a pure mental picture. The meditator retains this picture as his ideal and trains his mind to concentrate upon it. The mind becomes pure or impure not through its own nature, but through the arising of pure or impure thoughts. The purpose of the ideal selected for meditation must be such as to produce some psychological effect that is suited to the particular disposition of the meditator.

The scriptures record that the *Buddha* realized the diverse mental dispositions and innate tendencies of those who looked to Him for deliverance and recommended various methods to them. These methods were increasingly developed as it became necessary to expand the opportunity of training in this system to a greater variety of individuals.

These methods were later modified, enlarged, and grouped together in different ways, forming different schemes of meditation, according to their psychological effect and value in inducing higher states of consciousness, and also with their regard to their

suitability for various individual personalities. They are found in the discourses of the *Sutta Piṭaka*, in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, and the Commentaries, besides other works dealing with meditation, in the form in which they have been practiced and maintained to this day in the Theravādin School of Buddhism.

For the sake of clarity and convenience, we shall discuss the various methods of meditation according to the following order:

1. The methods found in the *Nikāyas*;
2. The methods found in the *Abhidhamma*;
3. The methods found in the works of Buddhaghosa Thera (the *Visuddhimagga* and other works);
4. The methods found in the later works.

1. The Methods Found in the Nikāyas

In the *Nikāyas*, the methods of meditation are treated in two ways: (1) on the one hand, they are given as recommendations befitting the different mental dispositions of individual meditators and (2), on the other hand, as a detailed explanation of the system of mental training (*bhāvanā*) in general. The Jhāna Vagga of the *Anguttara Nikāya*, Ekaka Nipāta (I, 34—40), gives the fullest list found in the *Sutta Piṭaka* of the various subjects recommended by the *Buddha*, which appear as follows:

A. The four *jhānas*:

> *"Monks, a Monk who cultivates (bhāveti) the first jhāna even for a moment, for the duration of a snap of the finger, is said to be the Monk who abides by no means unacquainted with meditation (jhāna), who follows the Master's teaching, who acts upon his advice, and who justly partakes of the alms offered by the country or the pious. How much more so they who practice it much."*[36]

This formula, with the same wording, is applied to the other three *jhānas* and with all of the following subjects.

B. The four subjects known as "divine abodes" (*brahmavihāra*):

1. *Mettā-cetovimutti*: *samādhi* induced by loving-kindness (*mettā*);
2. *Karuṇā-cetovimutti*: *samādhi* induced by compassion (*karuṇā*);

[36] According to the Commentary, certain of the Monks had become distressed upon hearing the Fire Sermon (Aggikkhandhopama Sutta, *Anguttara Nikāya* III), in which the *Buddha* explained the terrible result that would befall those ill-disciplined Monks who accepted the requisites offered by others without, however, fulfilling their duties. It was to console them that the *Buddha* delivered these discourses in this way, recommending the practice of meditation as the duty of a Monk.

3. *Muditā-cetovimutti*: *samādhi* induced by sympathetic joy (*muditā*);
4. *Upekkhā-cetovimutti*: *samādhi* induced by equanimity (*upekkhā*).

[Note: the following seven groups (C through I) constitute the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiyādhammā*).]

C. The four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*):

1. *Kāyānupassanā*: contemplation of the physical body (*kāya*);
2. *Vedanānupassanā*: contemplation of feelings (*vedanā*);
3. *Cittānupassanā*: contemplation of the state of the mind (*citta*);
4. *Dhammānupassanā*: contemplation of the contents of the mind (*dhamma*).

D. The four right efforts (*sammappadhāna*[37]):

1. *Saṁvara-padhāna*: to prevent unarisen unwholesome mental states from arising;
2. *Pahāna-padhāna*: to abandon unwholesome mental states that have already arisen;
3. *Bhāvanā-padhāna*: to develop wholesome mental states that have not yet arisen;
4. *Anurakkhana-padhāna*: to maintain and perfect wholesome mental states that have already arisen.

E. The four bases of psychic powers (*iddhipāda*):

1. *Chanda-iddhipāda*: concentration practiced with will (*chanda*);
2. *Viriya-iddhipāda*: concentration practiced with energy (*viriya*);
3. *Citta-iddhipāda*: concentration practiced with thought (*citta*);
4. *Vimaṁsā-iddhipāda*: concentration practiced with investigation (*vimaṁsā*).

F. The five spiritual faculties (*indriya*):

1. *Saddhindriya*: the faculty of faith (*saddhā*);
2. *Viriyindriya*: the faculty of energy (*viriya*);
3. *Satindriya*: the faculty of mindfulness (*sati*);
4. *Samādhindriya*: the faculty of concentration (*samādhi*);
5. *Paññindriya*: the faculty of full knowledge (*paññā*).

G. The five powers (*bala*):

1. *Saddhā-bala*: the power of faith (*saddhā*);

[37] Buddhist Sanskrit *samyak-pradhāna*, "right exertion". *Sammappadhāna* is equivalent to the sixth stage of the Noble Eightfold Path, "right effort" (*sammā-vāyāma*).

2. *Viriya-bala*: the power of energy (*viriya*);
3. *Sati-bala*: the power of mindfulness (*sati*);
4. *Samādhi-bala*: the power of concentration (*samādhi*);
5. *Paññā-bala*: the power of full knowledge (*paññā*).

H. The seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*):

1. *Satisambojjhanga*: mindfulness (*sati*) as a factor of full enlightenment;
2. *Dhammavicayasambojjhanga*: investigation of the truth (*dhamma*) as a factor of full enlightenment;
3. *Viriyasambojjhanga*: energy (*viriya*) as a factor of full enlightenment;
4. *Pītisambojjhanga*: rapture (ecstasy, zest) (*pīti*) as a factor of full enlightenment;
5. *Passaddhisambhojjhanga*: tranquility (serenity) (*passaddhi*) as a factor of full enlightenment;
6. *Samādhisambojjhanga*: concentration (*samādhi*) as a factor of full enlightenment;
7. *Upekkhāsambojjhanga*: equanimity (*upekkhā*) as a factor of full enlightenment.

I. The Noble Eightfold Path (*aṭṭhangika magga*):

1. Right view (right understanding) (*sammā-diṭṭhi*);
2. Right intention (right thought) (*sammā-saṁkappa*);
3. Right speech (*sammā-vācā*);
4. Right action (*sammā-kammanta*);
5. Right livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*);
6. Right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*);
7. Right mindfulness (*sammā-sati*);
8. Right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*).

[Note: here ends the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiyādhammā*).]

J. The eight stages of liberation (*vimokkha*):

1. Possessing *jhāna* attained in internal *rūpa* (material objects of *kasiṇa*), the *jhāyin* ("meditator") sees similar *kasiṇa* forms externally;
2. Possessing no *jhāna* of internal *kasiṇa* forms, he sees it in external forms;
3. He is intent on the thought, "it is good (*subha*[38])";
4. Passing entirely beyond perceptions of form (matter) (*rūpa-saññā*), with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance (reactions) (*paṭigha-saññā*), not attending to perceptions of diversity (variety)[39] (*nānatta-saññā*), thinking, "space

[38] A beautiful (or attractive) mental object.

[39] According to the *Visuddhimagga* (X, 20), the multiform perceptions outside the absorptions are meant here: "Perceptions of variety are the perceptions that arise in various fields, or the various perceptions."

(*ākāsa*) is infinite”, he attains and abides in the sphere of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*);
5. Passing entirely beyond the sphere of infinite space, thinking, “consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is infinite”, he attains and abides in the sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*), free from *ākāsa*;
6. Passing entirely beyond the sphere of infinite consciousness, thinking, “there is nothing”, he attains and abides in the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*), free from *viññāṇa*;
7. Passing entirely beyond the sphere of nothingness, he attains and abides in the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception (*nevasaññā-n'āsaññāyatana*);
8. Passing entirely beyond the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception, he attains and abides in complete cessation (*nirodha*) of perceptions (*saññā*) and feelings (*vedanā*).

K. The eight spheres of mastery of control (*abhibhāyatana*):

1. Possessing internal form-perception, one sees external forms, limited, fair or foul in color; having mastered them, thinking, “I know, I see”, thus, one perceives;
2. Possessing internal form-perception, one sees external forms, unlimited, fair or foul in color; having mastered them, thinking, “I know, I see”, thus, one perceives;
3. Possessing no internal form perception, one sees external forms, limited, fair or foul in color; having mastered them, thinking, “I know, I see”, thus, one perceives;
4. Possessing no internal form perception, one sees external forms, unlimited, fair or foul in color; having mastered them, thinking, “I know, I see”, thus, one perceives;
5. Possessing no internal form perception, one sees external blue forms, blue in color, blue in appearance, and blue in reflection; having mastered them, thinking, “I know, I see”, thus, one perceives;
6. Possessing no internal form perception, one sees external red forms, red in color, red in appearance, and red in reflection; having mastered them, thinking, “I know, I see”, thus, one perceives;
7. Possessing no internal form perception, one sees external yellow forms, yellow in color, yellow in appearance, and yellow in reflection; having mastered them, thinking, “I know, I see”, thus, one perceives;
8. Possessing no internal form perception, one sees external white forms, white in color, white in appearance, and white in reflection; having mastered them, thinking, “I know, I see”, thus, one perceives.

L. The ten *kasiṇas* (“devices”):

1. Earth-*kasiṇa* (*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*);

2. Water-*kasiṇa* (*āpo-kasiṇa*);
3. Fire-*kasiṇa* (*tejo-kasiṇa*);
4. Air-*kasiṇa* (*vāyo-kasiṇa*);
5. Blue-*kasiṇa* (*nīla-kasiṇa*);
6. Yellow-*kasiṇa* (*pīta-kasiṇa*);
7. Red-*kasiṇa* (*lohita-kasiṇa*);
8. White-*kasiṇa* (*odāta-kasiṇa*);
9. Space-*kasiṇa* (*ākāsa-kasiṇa*);
10. Consciousness-*kasiṇa* (*viññāṇa-kasiṇa*).

M. Twenty subjects known as *saññās*:[40]

(a) External Objects

1. Contemplation of impurity (*asubha saññā*);
2. Contemplation of light (*āloka saññā*);
3. Contemplation of the loathsomeness of food (*āhāre paṭikkūla saññā*);
4. Contemplation of detachment from the whole world (*sabbaloke anabhirata saññā*);
5. Contemplation of impermanence (*anicca saññā*);

[40] Various groups of *saññās*, "perceptions", which are made the object of contemplation, containing the "fives", the "sixes", the "sevens", and the "tens", are found in the *Anguttara Nikāya* — for example, a group of five, containing nos. 1 and 13 as the first two, and *ādīnavasaññā*, contemplation of the "dangers" or "evils" (in connection with the aggregates [*khandhas*]), which is not included in the list, as the third, and nos. 14 and 15 as the fourth and fifth. The same five are found in the *Anguttara Nikāya* III, 227, to be cultivated for the destruction of the passions. Nos. 11—15 are also found in the *Anguttara Nikāya* III, 79.

In *Anguttara Nikāya* III, 334, the six *saññās*, nos. 5—10, are found as the "*vijjābhāgiya*", states inducing higher wisdom, and they are repeated in *Anguttara Nikāya* III, 452. A group of seven *saññās*, containing nos. 11, 13, 1, *ādīnavasaññā*, and nos. 8, 9, and 10, are found in *Anguttara Nikāya* IV, 24, and are given, respectively, as the antidotes of: (1) sexual desire; (2) pride of life; (3) craving for food; (4) craving for worldly things; (5) craving for gain and fame; (6) sloth and torpor; and (7) egoism. The ten *saññās*, beginning with *asubha*, with *maraṇa* as the second, and followed by nos. 3—18, are found in a group given in *Anguttara Nikāya* V, 105.

In *Anguttara Nikāya* V, 106, there is a group of ten, containing nos. 11—20 from the list. Again, the Girimānanda Sutta (*Anguttara Nikāya* V, 108—112) has another list of ten *saññās*, containing nos. 11, 12, 1, *ādīnavasaññā*, nos. 8, 9, 10, 4, *sabbasankhāresu anicca saññā* ("the thought of the impermanence of all compounds"), which is not given in the list, and *ānāpānasati* in the name of *saññā*. In *Anguttara Nikāya* II, 150, the five following *saññās* are treated as the powers of the disciple who is pursuing the course of training: (1) *asubha*; (2) *āhāre paṭikkūla*; (3) *sabbaloke anabhirata*; (4) *sabbasankhāresu-anicca*; and (5) *maraṇa saññā*.

In *Anguttara Nikāya* III, 83, the same five *saññās* are given as the path to *nibbāna*. In *Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 345, there is also a group of five *saññās* containing nos. 6—10, while in *Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 129—131, there is a group of five *saññās* containing nos. 16—20.

But *āloka saññā* alone is not found in any of those groups. It is found as a single term in the passages dealing with the method of destroying sloth and torpor in, for example, *Anguttara Nikāya* II, 211, and III, 92; *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 181, 269, and 275; III, 3; etc. It is also found in *Anguttara Nikāya* III, 323. Thus, it is clear that *āloka* was only taken as a *kasiṇa* in the later development of the system.

6. Contemplation of the suffering nature of that which is impermanent (*anicce dukkha saññā*);
7. Contemplation of the soullessness of that which is suffering (*dukkhe anattā saññā*);
8. Contemplation of avoidance (*pahāṇa saññā*);
9. Contemplation of non-attachment (*virāga saññā*);
10. Contemplation of cessation (*nirodha saññā*).

(b) Concepts

11. Contemplation of impermanence (*anicca saññā*);
12. Contemplation of non-self (*anattā saññā*);
13. Contemplation of death (*maraṇa saññā*);
14. Contemplation of the loathsomeness of food (*āhāre paṭikkūla saññā*);
15. Contemplation of detachment from the whole world (*sabbaloke anabhirata saññā*);
16. Meditation upon a skeleton (*aṭṭhika saññā*);
17. Meditation upon a worm-infested corpse (*pulavaka saññā*);
18. Meditation upon a discolored corpse (*vinīlaka saññā*);
19. Meditation upon a fissured corpse (*vicchiddaka saññā*);
20. Meditation upon a swollen corpse (*uddhumātaka saññā*).

N. The recollections (*anussati*) and mindfulnesses (*sati*):

1. Recollection of the *Buddha* (*Buddhānussati*);
2. Recollection of the *Dhamma* (*Dhammānussati*);
3. Recollection of the *Sangha* (*Sanghānussati*);
4. Recollection of morality (*sīlānussati*);
5. Recollection of liberality (*cāgānussati*);
6. Recollection of celestial beings (*devatānussati*);
7. Mindfulness of death (*maraṇasati*);
8. Mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*);
9. Mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*);
10. Recollection of the peace of *nibbāna* (*upasamānussati*).

In this list, there are one hundred one subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), including the four fine material *jhānas*. These methods are to be found in the *Nikāyas*, sometimes individually and sometimes collectively, according to the demands of the occasion and the purpose for which they are recommended.

In the Mahāsakuludāyi Sutta (The Greater Discourse to Sakuludāyin) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 77), a full list is given, almost in the same form as that in the Jhāna Vagga of the *Anguttara Nikāya*. It appears in the course of an explanation of the entire system of meditation as taught to the disciples, which was given by the *Buddha* to Udāyin, a

wandering ascetic who introduced the matter into their discussion. Here, we find seventy-five principles, divided into nineteen groups, of which the first twelve contain sixty-eight methods of meditation, namely:

1. The thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiyādhammā*);
2. The eight stages of liberation (*vimokkha*);
3. The eight spheres of mastery of control (*abhibhāyatana*);
4. The ten devices (*kasiṇas*);
5. The four fine material, or form, absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*);
6. The *vipassanā* knowledge.

The remaining seven consist of:

1. The power of issuing mental forms;
2. The five supernormal powers (*abhiññā*);
3. The knowledge of the cessation of the taints (*āsava*), which leads to *nibbāna*.

In these two lists, subjects and methods are designed both for the path of *samādhi* and for that of *vipassanā*.

O. Methods of Vipassanā Meditation

In the twenty-fourth discourse of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, entitled Rathavinīta Sutta (The Relay Chariots), in replying to the questions of Venerable Sāriputta, Venerable Puṇṇa Mantāniputta expounds seven methods, describing them as the successive stages of purification (*visuddhi*) that lead to the attainment of the complete extinction of sorrow (*anupādā parinibbāna*). They are:

1. Purification of virtue (morality) (*sīla-visuddhi*);
2. Purification of mind (*citta-visuddhi*);
3. Purification of view (*diṭṭhi-visuddhi*);
4. Purification by overcoming doubt (*kankhāvitaraṇa-visuddhi*);
5. Purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path (*maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*);
6. Purification by knowledge and vision of the way (*paṭipadā-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*);
7. Purification by knowledge and vision (*ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*).

These are the stages of the development of insight (*vipassanā*) as the direct path to *nibbāna*. They are listed in the Rathavinīta Sutta but are not elaborated upon in this or any other discourse in the Pāḷi Canon. They are also listed in the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha* by Ācariya Anuruddha. The main source for uncovering their precise meaning is the *Visuddhimagga* (literally, *Path of Purification*), a detailed Commentary on the

teachings of the *Buddha* by Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, a fifth century CE Buddhist Monk (*Bhikkhu*) who lived in Śri Lanka.

These are the principal methods of meditation that are to be found in the *Nikāyas*. The tenfold knowledge of *vipassanā*, which is given below in further lists of methods, will be seen to be a development from the system of the seven stages of purification. With their wide scope, these embrace the whole system of mental training in Buddhism.

2. Subjects and Methods Found in the Abhidhamma

In the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, almost all the methods given in the above lists are discussed in relation to their psychological attributes. In the *Dhammasanganī* (166—264), the following subjects are found together with the *jhāna* formulas, while there is an explanation of the various states of consciousness that are attained in the advanced stages of mental training:

1. The eight *kasiṇas*;
2. The eight objects of mastery (*abhibhāyatana*);
3. The first three stages of liberation (*vimokkha*);
4. The four *brahmavihāras*;
5. The ten cemetery contemplations[41] (*sīvathikā*), which are:

    a. A swollen corpse (*uddhumātaka*);
    b. A discolored corpse (*vinīlaka*);
    c. A festering corpse (*vipubbaka*);
    d. A fissured corpse (*vicchiddaka*);
    e. A mangled corpse (*vikkhāyitaka*);
    f. A dismembered corpse (*vikkhittaka*);
    g. A cut and dismembered corpse (*hatavikkhittaka*);
    h. A blood-stained corpse (*lohitaka*);
    i. A worm-infested corpse (*puḷavaka*);
    j. A skeleton (*aṭṭhika*).

6. The four immaterial, or formless, absorptions (*arūpajjhānas*), corresponding to the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh *vimokkhas*.

In this list, we find only eight *kasiṇas*, the last two of the usual ten being omitted, inasmuch as they are connected with *arūpajjhāna*. In this connection, the following statement occurs in the Commentary (*Atthasālinī* 186):

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[41] Also known as the ten "impurities" (*asubha*), as in the *Visuddhimagga* VI. However, in the Girimānanda Sutta (*Anguttara Nikāya* X, 50), the perception of impurity (*asubha-saññā*) refers to the thirty-two body parts (*kāyagatāsati*). Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), p. 29.

> *In the Mahāsakuludāyi Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya II, 14), ten kasiṇas are mentioned. Of these, the viññāṇa ("consciousness") kasiṇa is the same as the sublime consciousness that prevails in space (which remains after the removal of the rūpajjhāna object), and it is also identical with the condition of infinite consciousness that is attained by the removal of the sphere of space. Thus, in every respect, it is related to the teaching concerning the formless attainments. Hence, it is not mentioned in this place (that is, in connection with form).*
>
> *The ākāsa ("space") kasiṇa is the same as the condition obtained by removing the other kasiṇa objects (of rūpajjhāna). It implies the (mental) aggregates suspended upon that object of space (the limited space), which should be taken as a point within the circumference of a hole in a wall, to give one example, and also the jhāna induced by it. Thus, this kasiṇa is related to arūpa, in the first place, and, in the second, to rūpa. Owing to this dual nature, it is not mentioned with reference to this purely rūpa state. The rūpajjhāna produced by limited space, however, is also a path to the attainment of the rūpa world and should, therefore, be taken into account.*

Another noteworthy point in regard to this list is the inclusion of the ten cemetery contemplations (*sīvathikā*, or *asubha*), which do not appear in the *Nikāyas* as a tenfold group. Five of them, however, correspond to the five *saññās* (nos. 16—20), beginning with *aṭṭhika*. However, it is possible that this scheme of cemetery contemplations is a derivation from the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta (The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 22), where a similar form of meditation is found, which is concerned with the nine stages of a dead body.

Four other methods remain to be added to this list. They are the four immaterial, or formless, absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*), corresponding to the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh stages of liberation (*vimokkha*). They are found in the *Dhammasangaṇī* (265ff.) as concomitants of the fourth *jhāna* in the attainment of the formless (*arūpa*) states.

Thus, this list contains thirty-seven subjects of *jhāna* meditation — thirty-three of *rūpajjhāna* and four of *arūpajjhāna*.

3. The Subjects Given in the Visuddhimagga

In the *Visuddhimagga* of Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa Thera, the forty subjects of meditation, known as *kammaṭṭhāna*, appear in seven divisions, as follows:

1. Ten devices (*kasiṇa*):

    a. Earth-*kasiṇa* (*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*);
    b. Water-*kasiṇa* (*āpo-kasiṇa*);
    c. Fire-*kasiṇa* (*tejo-kasiṇa*);

d. Air-*kasiṇa* (*vāyo-kasiṇa*);
e. Blue-*kasiṇa* (*nīla-kasiṇa*);
f. Yellow-*kasiṇa* (*pīta-kasiṇa*);
g. Red-*kasiṇa* (*lohita-kasiṇa*);
h. White-*kasiṇa* (*odāta-kasiṇa*);
i. Limited-space-*kasiṇa* (*paricchinnākāsa-kasiṇa*);
j. Light-*kasiṇa* (*āloka-kasiṇa*).

2. Ten cemetery contemplations (*asubha*, or *sīvathikā*):

   a. A swollen corpse (*uddhumātaka*);
   b. A discolored corpse (*vinīlaka*);
   c. A festering corpse (*vipubbaka*);
   d. A fissured corpse (*vicchiddaka*);
   e. A mangled corpse (*vikkhāyitaka*);
   f. A dismembered corpse (*vikkhittaka*);
   g. A cut and dismembered corpse (*hatavikkhittaka*);
   h. A blood-stained corpse (*lohitaka*);
   i. A worm-infested corpse (*puḷavaka*);
   j. A skeleton (*aṭṭhika*).

3. Ten recollections (*anussati*) and mindfulnesses (*sati*):

   a. Recollection of the *Buddha* (*Buddhānussati*);
   b. Recollection of the *Dhamma* (*Dhammānussati*);
   c. Recollection of the *Sangha* (*Sanghānussati*);
   d. Recollection of morality (*sīlānussati*);
   e. Recollection of liberality (*cāgānussati*);
   f. Recollection of celestial beings (*devatānussati*);
   g. Mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*);
   h. Mindfulness of death (*maraṇasati*);
   i. Mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*);
   j. Recollection of the peace of *nibbāna* (*upasamānussati*).

4. Four divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*):

   a. Loving-kindness (*mettā*);
   b. Compassion (*karuṇā*);
   c. Sympathetic joy (*muditā*);
   d. Equanimity (*upekkhā*).

5. Four immaterial, or formless, absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*):

a. The sphere of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*);
b. The sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*);
c. The sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*);
d. The sphere of neither perception nor non-perception (*nevasaññā-n'āsaññāyatana*).

6. The perception of the loathsomeness of food (*āhāre paṭikkūla saññā*);
7. Analysis of the four physical elements (*catudhātuvavatthāna*):

a. Earth element (solidity) (*paṭhavī-dhātu*);
b. Water element (cohesion) (*āpo-dhātu*);
c. Fire element (heat) (*tejo-dhātu*);
d. Air element (motion) (*vāyo-dhātu*).

The distinctive feature of this list is the section dealing with the devices (*kasiṇa*). Buddhaghosa modifies the ten *kasiṇas* by replacing *viññāṇa-kasiṇa*, "consciousness-*kasiṇa*", with *āloka-kasiṇa*, "light-*kasiṇa*", and changing *ākāsa-kasiṇa*, "space-*kasiṇa*", to *paricchinnākāsa-kasiṇa*, "limited-space-*kasiṇa*".

Buddhaghosa's comments on the *kasiṇas*, which are found in the *Manorathapūraṇī*,[42] appear to explain the reason for his omission of the *viññāṇa-kasiṇa* and the inclusion of the *paricchinnākāsa-kasiṇa*. It is given in *Atthasālinī* 186.

The contemplation of light (*āloka saññā*), which appears as a single item in the *Nikāyas*, is taken as a *kasiṇa* by Buddhaghosa. He also treats the perception of the loathsomeness of food (*āhāre paṭikkūla saññā*) as a separate form of meditation.

The analysis of the four physical elements (*catudhātuvavatthāna*) is briefly mentioned in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta (The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 22), while the Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta (The Longer Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant's Footprint) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 28 [I, 186]), the Mahārāhulovāda Sutta (The Greater Discourse of Advice to Rāhula) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 62 [I, 423]), and the Dhātuvibhanga Sutta (The Exposition of Elements) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 140 [III, 240]) explain it in detail. However, the analysis of the four physical elements seems to be taken from the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta rather than the other discourses, inasmuch as it is not dealt with in detail in the *Visuddhimagga*.

The *vimokkhas* and the *abhibhāyatanas* are not treated as separate methods by Buddhaghosa, and the comments about them in the *Atthasālinī* (p. 191) appear to explain them as the two methods supplementary to the four color *kasiṇas*. The details will be given later.

In the explanation of *vipassanā*, under the name of *paññābhāvanā*, Buddhaghosa gives full details of the last five purifications (*visuddhi*) as the means of developing *vipassanā*, the first two purifications being explained as the training in morality (*sīla*) and concentration (*samādhi*), respectively. In explaining the sixth purification, that is,

[42] The *Manorathapūraṇī* is Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the *Anguttara Nikāya*.

purification by knowledge and vision of the way (*paṭipadā*), Buddhaghosa gives the following scheme of the ninefold knowledge of insight:

1. Knowledge that reflects on the rise and fall of composite phenomena (*udaya-vayānupassanā ñāṇa*);
2. Knowledge that reflects on the breaking up, or perishable nature, of composite phenomena (*bhangānupassanā ñāṇa*);
3. Knowledge of the presence of fear of composite phenomena (*bhayatūpaṭṭhāna ñāṇa*);
4. Knowledge that reflects on the dangers of composite phenomena (*adīnavā-nupassanā ñāṇa*);
5. Knowledge that reflects on the feeling of disgust aroused by composite phenomena that are dangerous (*nibbidānupassanā ñāṇa*);
6. Knowledge of the desire for release from composite phenomena that arouse feelings of disgust (*muñcitukamyatā ñāṇa*);
7. Knowledge that reflects on the analysis of composite phenomena in order to be released from them (*paṭisankhānupassanā ñāṇa*);
8. Knowledge of indifference toward composite phenomena (*sankhārupekkhā ñāṇa*);
9. Adaptation knowledge that arises in connection with the Four Noble Truths (*anuloma ñāṇa*).

[Note: There are actually ten kinds of knowledge of insight, the tenth being *ñāṇadassana visuddhi*, the "purification of the knowledge of the *nibbāna* stages". This is explained separately with reference to its transcendental or supramundane merit. These items are explained in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (Book on Analytical Knowledge[43]), attributed to Venerable Sāriputta, as parts of super-knowledge. The scheme given here seems to be unique to the *Visuddhimagga*, for it has not yet been found in any earlier work. Some modification of this will be discussed later.]

These are, thus, the fundamental methods found in the *Visuddhimagga*.

In his Commentaries, Buddhaghosa also mentions that the subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) are thirty-eight in number, which is also the number mentioned in the *Atthasālinī* (168) and the *Dhammapada* Commentary (3, 421), but they are not discussed in detail in either of these works. As we have already seen, the last two of the ten *kasiṇas* were omitted in the *Dhammasanganī*. Thus, by taking out these two *kasiṇas* from the forty subjects of meditation, the number thirty-eight can be maintained. But forty is the number generally accepted, and these are the direct and fundamental methods in the system of meditation found in the Theravādin School.

The next important work on this subject is the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha* by Anuruddha Thera. This work, in dealing with both *samatha bhāvanā* and *vipassanā*

[43] This can also be translated as "Path of Discrimination".

bhāvanā, gives the same list of subjects of meditation in the *samādhi* section, and the sevenfold stages of purification and tenfold insight knowledges in the *vipassanā* section. The tenfold knowledge begins with *sammasana ñāṇa*, "knowledge of investigation (of the character of composite phenomena)". In all other respects, this work follows the treatment given in the *Visuddhimagga*.

4. The Methods Found in Later Works

Among the later works dealing with meditation, the *Vidarsaṇā Pota*,[44] a Sinhalese manual describing the practice of meditation followed by the Theravādin School in Śri Lanka, gives the same subjects of meditation found in the *Visuddhimagga*, but arranged in a somewhat different order and expressed in different terminology:

1. Mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*);
2. The ten devices (*kasiṇa*) — the first four are called "*bhūta-kasiṇa*" ("element *kasiṇas*"), and the rest "*vaṇṇa-kasiṇa*" ("color *kasiṇas*");
3. The ten cemetery contemplations (*asubha*);
4. The thirty-two body parts (*kāyagatāsati*), all of which are associated with the five *jhānas*;[45]
5. The ten recollections (*anussati*);
6. The four formless absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*);
7. The four divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*).

These seven groups contain the forty subjects of meditation. However, inasmuch as *kāyagatāsati* is divided into thirty-two parts, the total number is seventy-one. The special point in this arrangement is that mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) is placed first. *Kāyagatāsati* is treated as thirty-two methods, and the two subjects *āhāre paṭikkūla saññā* and *catudhātuvavatthāna* are treated as *anussatis*. In the *Vidarsaṇā Pota*, the first knowledge of insight, which appears in the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha* as *sammasana-ñāṇa*, is changed to *śamathadarśanajñāna*, "knowledge of insight into tranquility". There are no other variations.

[44] This manual, which was unknown for some time, was discovered by the late Śri Devamitta Dhammapāla (Anagārika Dharmapāla) in 1893 in the Bambaragala Vihāra library. The manuscript was handed over to the late T. W. Rhys-Davids, who edited it for the Pāḷi Text Society and published it in 1896. Rhys-Davids also wrote a valuable introduction to the subject, pointing out the different qualities, or states, that are introduced by the practice of the methods given, as shown in this work. There, we find a division into ten groups, embracing one hundred twelve states, including preliminary practice, methods, and their results, and the work was given the title of *Yogāvacara's Manual*. It has since been translated for the Pāḷi Text Society by F. L. Woodward under the title of *The Manual of a Mystic*, with an interesting Preface by Dr. C. A. F. Rhys-Davids.

[45] According to the *Abhidhamma* and the *Visuddhimagga*, these subjects of meditation induce only the first *jhāna*.

These subjects, which are to be found in the wide range of Buddhist literature on meditation, are almost limitless, for they were adapted in accordance with the different mental dispositions of the individual practitioners. Hereafter, we shall deal with the practice of *bhāvanā* and the distinguishing features of the more important subjects as described in the Pāḷi Canon, referring also to the commentarial exposition, especially the *Visuddhimagga*, the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*, and the *Yogāvacara's Manual*, which are indispensable for a full understanding of the Buddhist system of meditation. ■

6

Moral Purity

Meditation as a means of mental purification presupposes the possession of moral purity (*sīla-visuddhi*), which forms its essential foundation. The intrinsic value of morality in Buddhist teaching lies in the fact that it purges the mind of its unwholesome tendencies and leaves it clear for the production of internal illumination. The mind, which, in its ordinary, undisciplined condition, is wayward and accustomed to being controlled, influenced, and manipulated by the demands of every worldly impulse and passion of the lower instincts, is only brought under control with difficulty when a higher incentive is introduced for the first time as a mere stranger to this lack of authority. Since meditation is the means for transforming ordinary consciousness to a higher state, it is necessary that some previous training and discipline should be imposed upon the lower consciousness, regulating and restricting its usual activities, until it is in complete obedience to the directions of the higher mind. To this end, the mind must first be well equipped with such moral qualities as faith (confidence) (*saddhā*), mindfulness (*sati*), energy (*viriya*), and wisdom (*paññā*), and must establish them in such a position that they cannot be crushed by their adversaries. In all the schemes of Buddhist training, therefore, we find that training in morality (*sīla*) is an essential preliminary to further progress. Therefore, the practitioner should first have completely perfected the preliminary training in virtue, for it is the beginning of higher spiritual development. As stated in the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (V, 143): "What is the beginning of higher states? Morality of perfect purity."

Morality is of paramount importance in meditation, because it is an antidote to remorse and mental waverings, which are inimical to the concentration of the mind. To this end, it has been said (*Anguttara Nikāya* V, 1): "Ānanda, the benefit and advantage of moral virtues is the absence of remorse." Furthermore, in the Ākankheyya Sutta (If a *Bhikkhu* Should Wish) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 6 [I, 16]), it is stated:

> *"Monks, dwell possessed of virtue, possessed of the disciplinary rules (Pātimokkha), restrained with the restraint of the disciplinary rules, perfect in conduct and resolve, and seeing fear in the slightest fault, train by undertaking the moral virtues (precepts).*
>
> *"Monks, should a Monk desire to attain the jhānas, which are sublime, which constitute the higher states of consciousness, and which are conducive to a happy life, let him fulfill the moral virtues.*

"Monks, should a Monk desire tranquility, ... psychic powers, ... higher knowledge, ... complete cessation of the taints, let him fulfill the moral virtues."

Morality (*sīla*), being thus a fundamental feature of Buddhism, implies all good qualities that are included in the category of the moral and ethical teachings. Strictly speaking, it comprises, first, the consciousness built up by abstinence from immoral conduct, and, secondly, that built up by the possession of moral conduct developed by observing the positive rules enacted for moral purity. Its two salient characteristics are: (1) *samādhāna*, the firm establishing of the mind and thoughts together in harmony, and (2) *upadhāraṇa*, the supporting and holding together of all good qualities. The two aspects of *sīla*, negative and positive, are very distinctly marked in every department of religious and ethical life. The negative aspect emphasizes abstinence (*vāritta*) from unwholesome acts of body, speech, and mind, while the positive aspect emphasizes the necessity of performing (*cāritta*) wholesome acts of body, speech, and mind, thus accumulating good and fulfilling one's duty. Every formula laid down in connection with the precepts has these two aspects: (1) abstinence, avoidance, forbearance (*vāritta*) and (2) performing, developing, cultivating (*cāritta*). For instance (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 63; etc.): "He refrains from killing, lays aside the cudgel and the sword; full of kindness and compassion, he lives for the welfare and happiness of all living beings."

The first part of this formula teaches us to refrain from causing harm to any living being; the second part to love all beings and promote their happiness and welfare. The negative is thus logically prior to the positive, but, on the whole, both are interdependent. The negative aspect is preparatory and lays the foundation for the positive aspect. The negative is of value in withdrawing the mind from objects other than those of goodness, and the positive concentrates the entire mind so that it may render the greatest possible benefit. Thus, the negative leads to the elimination of undesirable qualities such as covetousness, ill will, and so on, while the positive leads to the development of desirable qualities such as generosity, compassion, good will, etc. — all these are to be understood by the term *sīla* in its general sense, and its importance is everywhere insisted upon as a necessary preparation for the practice of meditation.

The practice of *sīla* varies in accordance with the mode of life adopted by the practitioner, and, in connection with the life of a *samaṇa*,[46] the preliminary training is set forth in the Sāmaññaphala Sutta in four stages: (1) *sīla*, "morality"; (2) *indriya-saṁvara*, "restraint of the senses"; (3) *satisampajañña*, "mindfulness and clear comprehension"; and (4) *santuṭṭhi*, "contentment". As stated in this *sutta*, the previous training in these four principles forms the type of moral training that necessarily precedes meditation. The extensive explanation of these four principles occurs quite frequently in the *Nikāyas*, and a systematic training of them is given in the Dantabhūmi Sutta (The Grade of the Tamed) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 125).

In the Commentaries (for example, *Visuddhimagga* I), moral training, in general, has been explained under four headings: (1) *pāṭimokkha saṁvara*, "restraint according to

[46] Buddhist Sanskrit *śramaṇa*, "wanderer, recluse, ascetic".

the *pāṭimokkha*"; (2) *indriya-saṁvara*, "restraint of the senses"; (3) *ājīvapārisuddhi*, "purity of livelihood"; and (4) *paccayasannissita*, "purity regarding the requisites". The *Visuddhimagga* gives a detailed exposition of these four divisions in a general discussion of the moral purity presupposed by *samādhi*, the method of mental development:

1. *Pāṭimokkha saṁvara*, "restraint according to the *pāṭimokkha*": The 227 rules and regulations of moral training for Monks and the 331 rules and regulations of moral training for Nuns expounded in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* represent a special code of prohibitions and observances that are intended as the basic principles for leading the religious life (*brahmacariya*). These rules and regulations are called the "*pāṭimokkha*". Training in these rules and regulations produces that moral purity which is summarized in the three principles of right speech, right action, and right thoughts. The practitioner who acts in accordance to these three principles and who develops them to perfection will refuse to break them even at the risk of his or her life (*Visuddhimagga* I, 36).

2. *Indriya-saṁvara*, "restraint of the senses": When the Monk or Nun, acting in accordance with the rules and regulations expounded in the *pāṭimokkha*, has perfected moral purity, he or she is required to control his or her senses, for training in self-control is an essential condition for the protection of that moral purity. When one's life is so disciplined, the higher mind takes responsibility, and its influence is established and becomes manifest in regulated action of body, speech, and mind. A mind that is not established in mindfulness in regards to the restraint of the senses is continuously harassed by external sensory stimuli, which then penetrate it through the unguarded sense doors (*dvāra*) and become a source of mental corruption.

   When the mind is completely detached from its lower and more easily excited nature, it does nothing that is in any way undesirable. Then only is the practitioner able to bring his or her thoughts under control. This mastery can be achieved only by the curbing and complete control both of the sense organs and their activities. When the practitioner has withdrawn his or her mind from external objects and is guarded in mindfulness, complete restraint of the senses is assured. The purity of restraint according to the *pāṭimokkha* is then well protected.

3. *Ājīvapārisuddhi*, "purity of livelihood": The practitioner who has become experienced in the practice of the *pāṭimokkha*, controlling his or her physical and mental activities, must necessarily have achieved the ideal of a pure life. In this connection, he or she abstains from wrongful means of earning a living that involve transgression of the rules[47] enacted for the purity of livelihood. He or she

[47] If an ordained Monk attempts to earn a livelihood in a wrongful way, he may, on that account, be guilty of any of the six monastic offences: (1) *pārājika*, an offense requiring expulsion from the order; (2) *sanghādisesa*, an offense requiring suspension and penance; (3) *thullaccaya*, a grave offense; (4) *pācittiya*,

avoids all forms of trickery (deceit, dishonesty, fraud), theft (embezzlement, stealing), boastful talk (exaggeration, lying, slander), insinuation (ingratiation, flattery), and other wrongful means of supplying his or her daily needs. Purity of livelihood is an essential requirement for the practitioner who wishes to meditate. It is to be achieved by right effort in abandoning wrong living and by depending solely upon those requisites that are obtained in an honorable manner. When a practitioner who has not taken a special vow to observe the rules obtains all that he or she requires solely from his or her community or from a supporter who finds satisfaction in his or her religious practices, then a livelihood so obtained may be considered pure. But, the requisites obtained by seeking alms are especially clean and fit for one who has renounced the household life.

4. *Paccayasannissita*, "purity regarding the requisites": The *Buddha's* teaching must be pursued by practitioners with full commitment and dedication and in a truly scientific spirit. Experiential realization is the method followed, for the efficacy of the system can only be demonstrated by practical application. The *Buddha* has shown the full course of spiritual discipline, taking due account of individual experience and employing even the smallest means that is of any assistance. Meditation, as an act of deepening concentration, necessitates a disciplined course of training, especially in the preliminary stage, for the higher states of spiritual realization can only be unfolded within the meditator by developing the capacities latent in him or her through such a method.

   Specifically, inasmuch as the body is an instrument for the expression of energy, the more perfect the instrument, the better it will be able to express the energy dormant in it. Spiritual progress and attainment presuppose proper equipment for thorough development, and the first need, therefore, is to have a sound body, so perfectly attuned physically that it is not ruffled by lower impulses and emotions. Thus, physical health plays a considerable part in living the religious life.

   It is in this connection that Buddhism lays great emphasis on chastity, poverty, and adherence to the rules and regulations laid down in regard to the daily requisites of those who pursue the religious life as Monks and Nuns. The requisites that are permitted members of the *Sangha* are: (a) *cīvara*, "clothing"; (b) *piṇḍapāta*, "food obtained as alms"; (c) *senāsana*, "dwelling place"; and (d) *bhesaja*, "medicine".

   a. *Cīvara*, "clothing": Some yogins and ascetics in ancient India wore the skins of animals, while others covered themselves with the bark of trees. As for the Jains, some of them went around naked, while others wore a piece of white cloth. The *Buddha* prohibited these practices and, at first, instructed the

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an offense requiring explanation; (5) *pāṭidesaniya*, an offense requiring confession; and (6) *dukkaṭa*, an offense requiring confession and absolution.

Monks (*Bhikkhus*) only to wear clothing made by sewing together cast-off scraps of cloth, which are called "*paṁsukūla*", literally, "(cloth) taken after the soil and dust has been shaken off" (as stated in the *dhutanga* practices). At a later date, He allowed the wearing of simple robes of yellow or dull orange color, first cut into pieces and then sewn together again so that they might be deprived of commercial value. They consist of two under garments (*uttarāsanga* and *antaravāsaka*) and one upper robe (*sanghāṭi*) to cover the whole body except the head, hands, and feet. They are called "*kāsāva*", "dyed clothing". Monks should not possess more than one change of robes, allowed according to their physical condition. A Monk may possess only eight articles as his whole property: (1—3) three pieces of clothing (as stated above); (4) a belt for the waist; (5) an alms-bowl; (6) a razor; (7) a needle; and (8) a water-strainer. This is his only burden, which he carries with him wherever he goes. In exceptional cases, he may use a walking stick, a pair of sandals, a small mat to sit on, and a parasol. But all of these should be used with due mindfulness as to their true purpose. Thus, it is stated (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 10, etc.):

> *"Wisely reflecting, he wears robes for the warding off of cold and heat, of the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, and reptiles, and for the covering of nakedness."*

b. *Piṇḍapāta*, "food obtained as alms": The Monk or Nun whose life is wholly devoted to the practice of meditation should acquire physical fitness by moderation in eating, following these instructions (*Majjhima Nikāya* III, 134):

> *"Monks, be moderate in taking food; reflecting wisely with conscious purpose, accept food, not based upon personal likes and dislikes and not for beautifying the person, but only for the maintenance of the body, for the sustenance of life, for allaying the pangs of hunger, and for aiding religious practice; thinking thus, 'by this I shall subdue the old feelings of hunger and shall feel no new pangs (due to immoderate eating), and I shall be blameless and happy'."*

Due to the purification of the palate, those who train themselves in moderate eating are free from unnecessary hindrances. Moderation and discretion in eating (*bhojana-mattaññatā*) prevent self-mortification and ensure physical comfort. Accepting alms as a patient accepts medicine, one does not allow passion to penetrate one's mind. Possessing the advantage of a sound and well balanced body untouched by discontent, one is rid of drowsiness and discomfort. Temperate eating promotes bodily strength, which harmonizes with mental serenity; hence, the saying (*Theragāthā* 983):

> *"When he has eaten sufficiently, yet could still eat four or five more morsels, let him drink water, for this is surely enough for the Monk who has devoted himself to meditation."*

The monastic dietary discipline is given in great detail in the scriptures, especially in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*. There are rules not only concerning the quantity and character of the food, but also the time and manner in which it is to be taken. Restraint in eating also extends to good manners, for it is also laid down that all offensive and displeasing habits should be avoided in the taking of food by a Monk or a Nun.

c. *Senāsana*, "dwelling place": A quiet place in a forest, at the foot of a tree, or some other place of solitude is most conducive to the achievement of self-development and the attainment of perfection. The *Buddha* Himself, while seeking the path of self-enlightenment, lived aloof from the world and spent His life meditating in the forest, in caves, and under trees. It is natural, therefore, that He would recommend such places to His early followers (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 46):

> *"There are trees, there are places of solitude; go and meditate."*

But, for the benefit of others, He also recommended shelters and formulated rules as a guide to conduct therein. There are dangers that may sometimes befall the practitioner who lives in an open yard, or under a tree, or in some other exposed place, there being no door to protect him or her from disturbances, from harm, or from the sight of unsuitable objects. He or she is therefore allowed to accept a suitable dwelling as described in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* (II, 146) and, while using it, he or she should know and reflect upon its true purpose, realizing that, there, such dangers cannot cause him or her trouble nor hinder his or her meditation.

d. *Bhesaja*, "medicine": In case of sickness, the practitioner should take medicine in accordance with the advice of a doctor, but with due regard for the *Vinaya* rules. He or she should only accept those medicines that are produced from a source that is blameless and should reflect upon their purpose, that of counteracting the painful feeling caused by sickness and disorders of the body.

By using these requisites in so far as they are necessary to his or her well-being, and remaining untainted by greed (*lobha*) or craving (*taṇhā*), a practitioner acquires the virtue of purity in regard to the four requisites of his or her daily life.

In order for lay practitioners to engage in a concerted practice of cultivating calm abiding (*samatha*), the following five conditions must be present:

1. The sound basis of an ethically disciplined way of life;
2. Few personal needs or mundane chores to be done;
3. A good understanding of all the key elements and stages of the practice;
4. An appropriate diet and avoidance of excessive eating;
5. As few distractions as possible, with restriction of interactions with strangers or other people. ■

7

Cutting off Impediments

The practitioner who has achieved moral purification (*sīla-visuddhi*) and who is firmly established in well purified moral conduct must then become released from obstacles (*paḷibodha*), both internal and external. There are ten obstacles that may prove to be impediments in the practice of meditation. They are explained in the scriptures and enumerated in the *Visuddhimagga* as follows:

1. Abode (*āvāsa*);
2. Family (*kula*);
3. Gains (*lābha*);
4. A body of students (*gaṇa*);
5. Activities (*kamma*);
6. Traveling (*addhāna*);
7. Kinsfolk (relatives) (*ñāti*);
8. Illness (*ābādha*);
9. Study (*gantha*);
10. Psychic powers (*iddhi*).

1. Of these, "abode" (*āvāsa*) denotes a dwelling place, such as a room, a cell, or a monastery, in the case of a member of the *Sangha*, or a home, in the case of a lay practitioner. A dwelling place is to be regarded as an impediment only if it is a cause of anxiety and/or stress to the occupant, requiring him or her to undertake various responsibilities, such as that of maintaining it in good repair; or if it is in any way an object of attachment; or if it encourages the accumulation of unnecessary personal belongings. Meditation demands a complete abandonment of such impediments and, in the beginning, requires certain necessary deprivations. This point is frequently emphasized in the scriptures. Thus, it is said (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 63):

   > *"He reflects that it is not easy to practice brahmacariya, the noble religious life taught by the Buddha, while living in a house that is full of hindrances and the dust of passion; and, so, he decides to go forth to a homeless life, cutting off hair and beard, giving up any wealth he may have, and abandoning his kith and kin."*

This is the entry into the contemplative life, and it is the first cutting off of the impediments, which is essential for real success in living the religious life. The early disciples of the *Buddha* spent a lot of their time dwelling in solitude, living in the wilderness under a tree or in a cave. Their only possessions were a robe and an alms-bowl, which they carried with them wherever they went.

But this does not mean that the original institution of this religious system favored the infliction of the extremes of self-torture that were prevalent in the asceticism of the day. It was foreseen by the *Buddha* that the enthusiasm of vast masses of celibates would lead them to take delight in complete seclusion, undertaken with a view to subduing any ordinary impulses. It was to those with calmer spirits that the advantages of a contemplative life was offered. To an ordinary mind, it may seem that this mode of life cannot be led without much pain and suffering, but the primary idea was to free oneself from hindrances and to gain, thereby, the advantages necessary for success in meditation, not to endure penance and self-torture.

In the *Buddhavaṁsa*, the ascetic Sumedha, who, after four immensities and a hundred thousand eons, become Buddha Gotama, left his luxurious home and went to the mountain Dhammaka in the Himālayas for meditation. There, he found a hut made of leaves, but reflected that there are eight disadvantages to residing in a house, however small and simple it may be. The Commentary lists the disadvantages as follows: (1) its discovery or construction causes much trouble; (2) it requires repairs; (3) it should be relinquished to any elder who comes along, but concentration of mind is not possible when one's meditation is liable to be interrupted; (4) by protecting it from cold and heat, it makes the body tender and delicate; (5) it affords occasion to commit evil; (6) it causes covetousness, the mind being possessed by the thought, "this is mine"; (7) to live in a house is like having a troublesome companion; and (8) it has also to be shared with many other creatures, for it harbors vermin and the like.

He then reflected upon the ten advantages derived from residing under a tree: (1) it can be arranged without trouble — all that is necessary is to go to the tree; (2) it requires little attention — the ground can be swept and made suitable for use; (3) freedom from interruption; (4) it affords no occasion for one to commit evil; (5) the body is not exposed to the open sky but is covered to some extent; (6) no idea of possession is involved; (7) all craving for a household is abandoned; (8) unlike a house, it requires no defense; (9) he who dwells there experiences happiness and contentment; and (10) a meditator can come upon a tree wherever he goes — it is not necessary for him to think of it as his dwelling, that is, that he will have to return to the place he previously occupied. (*Jātaka* Commentary, pp. 9—10.)

Thus, it is said (*Buddhavaṁsa* 32—34):

> *"I then forsook my hut of leaves, so crowded with evils, eight in number, and approached the foot of a tree, which provided virtues, ten in number.*
>
> *"No sown and cultivated grains were allowed by me for my food, but the fruit falling from the tree bestowed many benefits on me.*

"Strenuous was I there in meditation, sitting, standing, walking back and forth. Before seven days had passed away, I attained the power of higher knowledge."

Thus, the *Buddha*, having realized the advantages of this way of living and, thereby, having experienced immediate results, declared (*Anguttara Nikāya* II, 27):

"Monks, a dwelling at the foot of a tree is simple, easily obtained, and blameless."

In order to achieve the highest goal of mental training, meditation requires strenuous effort and absolute solitude, far removed from the bustling and restless crowd. But, although the instructions regarding this exercise demand a rigorous discipline, they are not beyond the capacity of the ascetic nor productive of any pernicious consequences.

For the benefit of less hardy individuals, the *Buddha* recommended several types of shelter for their dwellings and allowed lay people to build *vihāras* (monastic dwellings) for the Monks and Nuns. Moreover, many rules were formulated for the guidance of those living in such *vihāras*.

This situation was discussed by King Milinda and Venerable Nāgasena,[48] who made the following statement (*Milindapañha* 111—112):

"The beast of the forest has no settled dwelling; he eats his food here and there and lies down to sleep in whatever place he may happen to be. The faithful disciple must, in this respect, be like it. But there are two advantages in building vihāras: (1) It is an act praised by the Buddhas, and they who help a virtuous Monk in this way will acquire merit, which aids in their release from suffering and is of assistance in the attainment of nibbāna. (2) When the vihāras are built, the Bhikkhunīs have an opportunity to receive instructions from a Bhikkhu. Thus, there is a reward for those who build dwellings for Monks. But the faithful one will not prefer such a place for his residence."

When a Monk resides in a fixed habitation, there is a tendency for him to become enamored of it. But, to him who follows the advice of the *Buddha*, his place of residence is no impediment. In this connection, Buddhaghosa Thera relates the following story (*Visuddhimagga* I, 91):

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[48] Nāgasena was a learned Monk whose conversation with King Milinda on difficult points of Buddhist doctrine was recorded in the *Milindapañha* (*Milinda's Questions*). Nāgasena is thought to have lived in the first century CE. He came from a Brahmin family and entered the Buddhist *Sangha* at the age of fifteen. He studied in various places, including Pātaliputra, where he is said to have attained Arahatship. He is considered to have been extremely talented; after only one hearing, he purportedly memorized the entire *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.

There were two friends who received ordination at the Thūpārāma, near Anurādhapura. One of them, having mastered two mātikās, afterwards went to a forest dwelling called Pācīnakhaṇḍarājī, where he lived for a long time. Finding it both pleasant and beneficial thus to live in contemplative solitude (paṭisallāna), he decided to go and tell his friend of the advantage he had derived. He set forth and, in due course, reached the Thūpārāma. Seeing him entering, his friend received him with due respect.

With the dawning of the day after his arrival, the Monk who had been dwelling in the forest thought: "Now, the people who support my friend will send rice-gruel and cake, for he has lived a long time in this town." But nothing of the kind occurred. He then thought that, inasmuch as the people had not brought any food, they would go together to the city with bowls for alms. At the proper time, he accompanied his friend to the town and, going on their rounds, they received only a handful of rice-gruel, which they ate at the assembly hall. He now thought that, at the mealtime, they would be plentifully supplied with excellent food. But, what they received was a mere trifle, and the Monk from the forest asked: "What is this? Do you live this way all the time?" "Yes, my friend," replied the other.

"My forest dwelling is better. Let us go there."

The Monks at once set forth on the road leading to Pācīnakhaṇḍarājī. Now, as they came out of the city by the southern gate, the Monk from the forest asked his friend: "Why, sir, do you take this road?"

"Did you not recommend Pācīnakhaṇḍarājī?" was the reply.

"Yes, but what is this, sir, [you come empty-handed]. Do you not have any belongings in the place where you have lived for so long?"

"No, friend, I do not. The bed and chair that I use belong to the Sangha, and they are put away [as usual]. There is nothing else."

" But, sir, I have left my staff, oil bowl, and sandal-bag at the vihāra."

"Have you, my friend, deposited so much after staying there only one night?"

"Yes, venerable sir."

The Monk from the forest then said: "Sir, to faithful ones like you, everywhere is as a forest dwelling. It is better that you remain here." On the following morning, he returned alone to the Thūpārāma.

To such a one, an abode is no impediment. But, if a disciple living in a fixed residence finds it an impediment in any way for his meditation, he must, at once, renounce it.

2. Family (*kula*): The family means either relatives or supporters. A disciple who lives with his family, his relatives, or his supporters may find it an impediment, because he is so closely connected with them that he is happy when they are happy and unhappy

when they are unhappy. Without them, he rarely even goes to a monastery to hear the doctrine. Such a person may find it difficult to live the life of a recluse. If attachment to family becomes a bond for the disciple, he must free himself from such bonds and acquire the detachment of the disciple whose story is told in the *Visuddhimagga*:

> *Though he ate for three months in the house of the mother who gave him birth, she did not recognize him as her son, for he had been absent for a long time, and he stayed there without saying, "I am your son. You are my mother." Afterwards, the mother, when she discovered that he was her own son, clasped her hands in reverence and, facing the direction in which he had gone, exclaimed: "Oh, the wonderful disciple! I think it was to a living testimony of a Monk like my son that the Blessed One preached the practice prescribed in the [scriptures], in which contentment with mere requisites for existence, detachment from worldly things, faith, and joy in higher religious practice are set forth."*

To such a one, even parents are no impediment, much less one's family, or relatives, or supporters. This does not mean that there is lack of gratitude on the part of such disciples towards their family, relatives, or supporters, but that they enjoy impartiality and the pure life of detachment.

> *"Everywhere, the sage, detached, renounces alike both the pleasant and the unpleasant; neither grief nor lamentation cling to him, as water does not cling to the lotus-leaf."* (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* 811, 4, 6.)

3. Gains (*lābha*): Under this heading are grouped the four requisites: (1) clothing; (2) food; (3) dwellings; and (4) medicine. A member of the *Sangha* who is renowned and who possesses much merit is sometimes given the requisites in abundance by his admirers and supporters. In thanking them and in preaching the doctrine to them, he is left few opportunities to fulfill his duties as a recluse. Perhaps his whole day may be occupied in accepting invitations and visiting friends. To such a disciple, the gains are an impediment. Hence, he should forsake his social activities and go some place where he is not known in order to eliminate this impediment.

4. A body of students (*gaṇa*): This implies having a following of students who are studying either *suttanta* or *Abhidhamma*. Being occupied in giving lessons or putting questions to a group of students, a Monk may have no time to practice meditation in seclusion. In this way, the care of a group of students is an impediment, which should be cut off thus: If his students have learned much and little remains to be taught, the Monk should continue to the end and then lead the life of a recluse. If little has been studied and much remains to be taught, the Monk should find another teacher, dwelling within a convenient distance, to instruct his students. Failing this, he should notify them: "Friends, I have something to do and cannot continue giving

lessons. Please feel free to find another teacher." He should then hasten to do his own work.

5. Activities (*kamma*): The "activities" referred to here are necessary undertakings, such as repairs to existing monasteries and shrines as well as building new ones. If one is concerned with these matters, he has to know whether carpenters and other workmen have been doing their assigned tasks or not, and he is likely to be occupied with affairs both great and small. Thus, these activities become an impediment that should be cut off in this way: If little remains to be done, he should supervise it until it is finished. If there be much to do and it concerns the property of the *Sangha*, he should turn it over to the *Sangha* or to those Monks who bear responsibility. If it is his own concern, he should turn it over to his own trustees. Failing this, he should leave that monastery and seek out another, or he should go his own way.

6. Traveling (*addhāna*): This refers to any journey that has to be undertaken. It may be that some person is waiting at a certain place to receive full ordination or to take the vows of a novice. Or, one may have to receive a requisite that he cannot conveniently forgo. In such circumstances, he should go and finish what has to be done, after which he should apply himself with zeal to meditation.

7. Kinsfolk (relatives) (*ñāti*): To a Monk in a monastery, his teacher, his preceptor, the resident students, his own students, and his fellow Monks are his kinsfolk. In his former home, kinsfolk include his mother, father, brothers, sisters, and so forth. Should sickness or some other misfortune come upon them, they may become an impediment. The disciple should address this situation by attending to them and making them well again. If one's preceptor is ill and his sickness proves incurable, he should be taken care of for as long as his life lasts. The same should be done for one's teacher, resident students, one's own students, or a fellow Monk who was ordained under the same preceptor as oneself. If they are in need of medicine, he should obtain it for them. As for his mother, father, brothers, sisters, and so forth, he should obtain medicine for them, and he should assist in their care. Then, after the recovery or death of the sick person, he should resume his religious duties.

8. Illness (*ābādha*): This refers to any disease that may befall the Monk himself and thus be an impediment. It should be cut off by proper medical attention. If medical attention is unable to bring about his recovery, he should admonish himself thus: "I am not a slave or a servant to this disease. Long have I suffered pain and distress in the endless round of existence (*saṁsāra*)." Then, let him practice meditation like the elder Cakkhupāla, who, paying no attention to the pain in his eyes, attained Arahatship through strenuous efforts, blind though he was. He said to himself (*Dhammapada* Commentary I, 11):

"Eyes, ears, and all that pertain to form — wrongly called 'myself' and 'mine' — all these fall swiftly into decay; then, Pāla, why delay?"

9. Study (*gantha*): The "study" referred to here is the study of the scriptures. To be always engaged in learning and reciting something can be an impediment, though mere study itself is not. In this connection, the *Visuddhimagga* (I, 97) tells the following story: An elder (*thera*) named Deva, a reciter of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, went to another elder of the same name and asked for a subject for meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*). "What discourses (*sutta*) do you study in the scriptures?", asked the second elder. "I study the *Majjhima Nikāya*, Sir." "Friend, the *Majjhima Nikāya* is difficult; while learning the first fifty (discourses), one comes to the next fifty; while learning these, one comes to the third fifty. Where, then, is there time to practice meditation?" "Sir, after receiving a *kammaṭṭhāna* from you, I shall not look at the scriptures again." He received a *kammaṭṭhāna*, and, without reciting the scriptures, he meditated for nineteen years and reached Arahatship in the twentieth year. To the students who came to learn from him, he said: "Friends, for twenty years, I have not looked at the scriptures. However, I have studied the *Majjhima Nikāya*." From the beginning to the end, he was never in doubt, not even about a single verse. As stated in the *Dhammapada* (verses 19—20):

   "Though one may be well-versed in the scriptures and be able to recite them from beginning to end, if one does not put into practice their teachings, then such a heedless one may be likened to a cowherd who counts someone else's cattle — that one will gain none of the benefits of living the Holy Life.

   "Though one may know little of the scriptures, if one nonetheless puts into practice their teachings, forsaking lust, hatred, and false views, truly knowing, with a disciplined mind, clinging to nothing either in this life or the next, then that one will surely gain the benefits of living the Holy Life."

10. Psychic powers (*iddhi*): Psychic powers are those attained by an ordinary worldling (*puthujjana*) through *samādhi* meditation, and they only impede the practitioner who wishes to practice *vipassanā* meditation. Thus, anyone who wishes to practice *vipassanā* meditation should become free from these powers as well as the other nine impediments mentioned above. ■

8

The Search for a Friend or Teacher

The religious culture of Buddhism is essentially a direct inheritance from the *Buddha* and His great disciples,[49] and the advantage of receiving instruction and support from a teacher is frequently emphasized. Association with a friend, one that can be described as a *kalyāṇa mitta*,[50] is to be recognized by the following qualities (*Anguttara Nikāya* IV, 32; *Visuddhimagga* I, 98):

He is revered and deeply loved,
A counselor and a patient listener.
The speech he utters is profound, and [he is] one
Who would not lead to a useless end.

The scriptures explain that association with a *kalyāṇa mitta* possesses manifold advantages. According to the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (I, 88), the complete fulfillment of the religious life depends mainly upon a *kalyāṇa mitta*:

"Indeed, Ānanda, on account of approaching me, as the good friend, beings who are subject to suffering caused by birth become happy, being freed from birth … from decay … from death."

And further (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* 45:2): Once, Venerable Ānanda, who was deeply devoted to the Master, spoke of noble friendship as being "half of the holy life", believing he had duly praised its worth. The *Buddha* replied: "Do not say so, Ānanda, do not say so: it is the entire holy life to have noble friends, noble companions, noble associates."

Such passages as the above show that the Supreme *Buddha* Himself was a good friend (*kalyāṇa mitta*), endowed with all necessary qualities. Moreover, the tradition is that the *Buddha* would give each disciple a subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) suited to his disposition and would afterwards question him about it. Later, it became the practice for disciples to receive subjects of meditation from a teacher.

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[49] For details on the lives of the great disciples, see: Nyanaponika Thera and Hellmuth Hecker, *Great Disciples of the Buddha* (Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications [1997]).

[50] One who is the mentor and friend of his pupil, wishing for the pupil's welfare and concerned about his or her progress, who teaches him or her meditation, is called a *kalyāṇa-mitta*, literally, "a noble (or good) friend".

The Mahārāhulovāda Sutta (The Greater Discourse of Advice to Rāhula) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 62) describes how the *Buddha* recommended to His son, Rāhula, several subjects of meditation, such as the analysis of the four elements (*dhātu*), loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), equanimity (*upekkhā*), impurity (*asubha*), and transitoriness (*anicca*), while Rāhula's own teacher, Venerable Sāriputta, advised him to practice mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*). In the Meghiya Sutta (*Anguttara Nikāya* IV, 354—358), which illustrates the important part played by a good friend, the *Buddha* recommends several methods of meditation to Meghiya, as best befitting his disposition.

The elder Meghiya received permission to go for alms to the village of Jantu. On his return, he saw a pleasant mango-grove near the river and asked the *Buddha* if he might go there to meditate. He was told to wait until he should find another Monk (a good friend, a *kalyāṇa mitta*) willing to go there with him. But, after he had repeated his request three times, he was granted permission. Meghiya went to the mango-grove and sat down under a mango-tree to meditate, but he was surprised to find that evil thoughts were persistently arising in his mind. He then returned to the *Buddha* and told Him what had happened. The *Buddha* explained the reason, which was that he whose mind is not yet sufficiently trained to gain release requires five things at the outset: (1) a good friend (who would instruct him on how to meditate); (2) an advanced state of moral purity (*sīla-visuddhi*); (3) proper discussion, tending to *nibbāna*; (4) establishment of the energy needed for the abandonment of evil thoughts; and (5) the acquisition of the knowledge leading to insight.

The *Buddha* went on to explain that one who has obtained the first of these, that is, a good friend, will soon be able to obtain the other four. The *Buddha* then advised Meghiya that, after having obtained the first of these requirements, he should practice *asubha* ("cemetery meditations"), *mettā* ("loving-kindness"), *ānāpānasati* ("mindfulness of breathing"), and *anicca-saññā* ("perception of impermanence") in order to eliminate lust, hatred, agitation, and the idea of permanence, respectively. Having received this advice from the *Buddha*, Meghiya practiced meditation and, in due course, won the final release of Arahatship. In light of this and other such incidents, it was considered necessary for disciples to receive their subjects of meditation from a teacher who was able to determine their mentality and character, choose a suitable subject, and explain the method of meditation upon it.

It is for beginners especially that association with a teacher is an indispensable support, for the immediate success in meditation is largely due to a capable teacher who can guide them on the path of liberation. The disciple, therefore, should first complete his preliminary training and approach a good friend, a teacher possessing the above-mentioned qualities and obtain from him a suitable subject of meditation. An in-depth account of these matters is given in the *Visuddhimagga* (I, 97—117), from which the following discussion is an abstract.

During His lifetime, a subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) received from the *Buddha* Himself was rightly considered to be "well received". But, inasmuch as this is no longer possible, one should receive a subject of meditation from an *Arahat*, preferably

an *Arahat* who has attained to the fourth and fifth *jhāna* states by means of the same subject and who has attained Arahatship by developing insight on the basis of *jhāna*. If such a person is not available, one should approach the following persons in order of precedence: (1) a Non-Returner (*Anāgāmi*); (2) a Once-Returner (*Sakadāgāmi*); or (3) a Stream-Winner (*Sotāpanna*). When none of these persons are available, one should go to a teacher who has attained the *jhāna* states or to someone who knows the three *Piṭakas* (*Vinaya Piṭaka*, *Sutta Piṭaka*, *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*), two *Piṭakas*, or at least one *Piṭaka*. Failing to find such a person, one should go to someone who is able to recite one of the *Nikāyas* together with its Commentary and who is himself a person worthy of respect due to his having made progress along the path to liberation.

If such a person happens to reside in the same community or, in the case of Monks and Nuns, monastery as oneself, well and good. If not, one should go to seek him wherever he resides. The disciple should spend several days in the place where he finds such a teacher, and, having fulfilled the duties expected of a student, he should ask for a subject of meditation most befitting his mental disposition.[51]

The Six Kinds of Character

The *Visuddhimagga* states that *carita*, or the "character" of human beings, is of six kinds: (1) lustful nature (*rāga-carita*); (2) hateful nature (*dosa-carita*); (3) deluded nature (stupid, dull, or dim-witted) (*moha-carita*); (4) faithful nature (*saddhā-carita*); (5) intellectual nature (intelligent) (*buddhi-carita*); and (6) disturbed, hyperactive (ADHD), unsettled, or agitated nature (*vitakka-carita*). Although there are a great variety of mental dispositions, owing to the mixed nature of mental states, these six types are generally considered to be predominant.

The Commentaries explain that the character of a person is the expression of his or her mentality and is determined by previous *kamma* and by the condition of his or her physical elements. Human beings can also have different temperaments depending upon racial, generational, and gender differences, social conventions, ethnicity, geographical location, economic and social status, mental and physical health, and climatic conditions, to name some of the more obvious. Just as there are many kinds of character, so there are many methods of meditation. A teacher of meditation, therefore, should first discern the particular character of his student and then choose a suitable subject for that character. The following are some of the main characteristics by which one may judge whether a person is lustful, irascible, or whatever else his or her nature may be:

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[51] Members of the Charleston Buddhist Fellowship are encouraged to attend meditation retreats at IMC-USA in Westminster, MD (410-346-7889). Retreats last ten days and are coordinated through IMC-USA. Fees are set by IMC-USA. Advance registration is required. Retreats begin with instructions on *samatha* meditation. After several days of practicing *samatha* meditation, instructions are given on *vipassanā* meditation, which is then practiced for the remainder of the retreat period. Attendees are expected to remain silent during the retreat and to follow the eight precepts (*aṭṭha-sīla*).

1. One of the ways in which it is possible to ascertain a person's character is to make a careful observation of his or her postures and movements, that is to say, his or her manner of walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, etc.

   In this connection, those who are of a lustful (or sensuous) nature are said to be naturally graceful in their gait. They tread softly and evenly. Their footprint is divided in the middle, that is, there is a break between the impression made by the heel and that made by the forepart of the sole. Their foot is hollow beneath and has a high instep.

   Those who walk by digging in with their toes, who put their foot down swiftly and lift it up suddenly are said to be of an irascible (angry) temperament. Their footprint shows a trailing mark, as though they dragged the foot in putting it down.

   Those who are disposed to delusion go with a shambling gait, pacing as though they were nervous. Their foot leaves a hasty impression.

   In standing, sitting, and general deportment, those of a lustful (sensuous) nature are typically charming and polite, often disarmingly so. Those who are irascible, hateful, and unfriendly are typically stiff in manner. They tend to make others feel uncomfortable or guarded by their presence. Those who are deluded, dim-witted, or of limited intelligence, are typically slovenly in manner. They lack depth in their understanding and experience. This is evident by the superficiality of their conversations, their lack of problem-solving ability, the narrow range of their likes and dislikes, and their simple-minded, one-dimensional outlook on life.

   In sleeping, those who are lustful prepare their beds smoothly and lie down gently. They sleep in a composed manner, keeping their limbs still. When they awaken, they do not arise abruptly. When addressed, they reply gently and thoughtfully, as though willingly. Those disposed to hatred prepare their beds after any fashion and in a hasty manner. They sleep with a stiff and unrelaxed body. On being awakened, they respond as though in anger. Those who are deluded prepare their bed untidily, sleep with the body sprawling, keeping their face downward most of the time. Upon awakening, they rise sluggishly, uttering grunts of dissatisfaction.

   In regard to the three remaining types of character, it should be added that, in its outward expression, faith resembles lustfulness (sensuousness), while intellectuality resembles hate and irascibility, and agitation resembles delusion. They may therefore be detected by similar observation and by comparing the results with those outlined above.

2. A second means of distinguishing these types of character is by observing the manner in which persons perform their physical tasks, such as cleaning, sweeping, and getting dressed. Those of a lustful (sensuous) nature do everything artfully. When they clean their surroundings, they sweep, mop, dust, or vacuum smoothly and carefully. They clean thoroughly and with even motions. Those of an irascible nature do the work roughly and carelessly, making a harsh noise with the

broom, mop, duster, or vacuum cleaner. Those who are foolish, dim-witted, or deluded, clean awkwardly and unevenly, turning back here and there, leaving traces of rubbish behind. In the same way, these differences are apparent in all kinds of work that they perform.

Generally speaking, those of a lustful disposition are skillful, polished, tidy, and circumspect workers. Those who possess a hot temper are rough, noisy, and hard workers. Those who are deluded and foolish are unskillful, clumsy, and untidy workers.

The manner in which they wear their clothes provides another clue into a person's character. The clothes of those who are lustful are worn neither too tightly nor too loosely, but in a pleasing, neat, and tasteful manner. The clothes of those who are irascible are too tight and lack finish, while the clothes of those who are deluded are loose and untidy. The same comparison, as was mentioned above, with regard to the remaining three types of character (faithful, intellectual, and agitated) can also be made in these matters.

3. Thirdly, one may note the differences in character from the choice of food and the manner in eating it. Those who are lustful prefer soft, tasty food that is well prepared and served in a sumptuous fashion. They also like sweets. They eat gently and slowly, enjoying the taste and taking a small quantity at a time. Those who are hot-tempered like course food with a sour, sharp, or penetrating taste. They eat hastily, filling their mouth, without enjoying the taste. They dislike food that has no pronounced flavor and are dissatisfied with it. Those of a foolish character have no particular taste and take whatever food happens to come their way. They eat ungracefully, putting large lumps of food into their mouth and making a mess in the process.

4. Fourthly, the characters of people may be judged by their reactions to sensory stimuli. Those who are lustful, upon seeing an object they find pleasing, look at it long, as though admiring it, they become attracted to it, and they do not see its disadvantages. When they leave the object, they look back with regret. Those who are disposed to anger and hatred, upon seeing an object, take no interest in it and soon leave it. They will find even the slightest fault in an object, overlooking its merits. Those of a foolish nature have no distinctive tastes of their own with regard to sensory stimuli. They depend upon the opinions of others and condemn and blame accordingly. They find no real interest owing to lack of intelligence. The same is true of each person with regard to the other senses. The other three types of character can be judged by comparison, as before.

5. Finally, these different types of character express themselves in those mental states that predominate. From this, certain conclusions may be drawn.

   Mental states such as pretentiousness, deceitfulness, vanity, pride, evil-desire, covetousness, dissatisfaction, lasciviousness, and frivolity arise in the

> minds of those who have a lustful disposition. Anger, malice, ingratitude, rivalry, envy, meanness, and other similar states frequently arise in the minds of those who are irascible. In those who have a dull nature, sloth, torpor, distraction, remorse, perplexity, stubbornness, and tenacity arise in abundance.
>
> Pure liberality, charity, desire to meet those engaged in religious practices, desire to hear the *Dhamma*, cheerfulness, frankness, honesty, faith and religious devotion are the qualities frequently expressed by those of faith. Those who are intellectual are distinguished by their gentleness, good friendship, moderation, mindfulness, self-possession, and alertness. They feel deeply moved at the emptiness and sorrow of the world, but, wisely taking things as they are, they make right effort for liberation. Talkativeness, desire for the company of others, lack of sustained moral application, unsteadiness in work, want of concentration are the states predominating in those whose minds are scattered.

These are the general observations that will help one determine the disposition of others from their outward characteristics, but divergences should be expected, owing to the great variety and complexity of the mental concomitants. Only those who have acquired the ability to gauge the disposition of others intuitively are able to know which subjects of meditation are most suitable for a disciple. Those who have not acquired such an ability should question their disciples in terms of the distinctive characteristics listed above in order to determine their disposition. The teacher who is able to determine the character of a disciple, either through the faculty of the ability to gauge the disposition of others intuitively or by questioning and watching his or her activities, speech, reactions, etc., should choose a suitable subject for a disciple from among the forty subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) listed in the *Visuddhimagga* and other works. ■

9

The Choice of a Kammaṭṭhāna

We learn from the *Visuddhimagga* that there are ten points of view, ten ways in which the subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) should be understood:

1. By way of number;
2. By way of concentration (*samādhi*);
3. By way of absorptive state (*jhāna*);
4. By way of transcending (*samatikkama*);
5. By way of extension (*vaddhana*);
6. By way of sign, or mark (*nimitta*);
7. By way of the plane of existence (*bhūmi*);
8. By way of taking (*gahaṇa*);
9. By way of cause (*paccaya*);
10. By way of befitting character (*caritānukula*).

A thorough knowledge of the subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) is essential for all practitioners, especially those who choose the path of *samādhi* meditation in order to gain liberation. A disciple must acquire this essential knowledge through a careful study of *kammaṭṭhāna*, pursued in these ten ways, and, if one is unable to find a suitable and experienced teacher, the study of the subjects itself can take the place of a teacher. A detailed discussion of the subjects of meditation is found in the *Visuddhimagga* (11, 110—117), from which the following account is taken.

1. By Way of Number

There are forty subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) arranged in seven groups:

1. Ten devices (*kasiṇa*):

    (1) earth-*kasiṇa* (*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*);
    (2) water-*kasiṇa* (*āpo-kasiṇa*);
    (3) fire-*kasiṇa* (*tejo-kasiṇa*);
    (4) air-*kasiṇa* (*vāyo-kasiṇa*);

(5) blue-*kasiṇa* (*nīla-kasiṇa*);
(6) yellow-*kasiṇa* (*pīta-kasiṇa*);
(7) red-*kasiṇa* (*lohita-kasiṇa*);
(8) white-*kasiṇa* (*odāta-kasiṇa*);
(9) space-*kasiṇa* (*ākāsa-kasiṇa*);
(10) consciousness-*kasiṇa* (*viññāṇa-kasiṇa*).

2. Ten objects of impurity (*asubha*):

(11) a swollen corpse (*uddhumātaka*);
(12) a discolored corpse (*vinīlaka*);
(13) a festering corpse (*vipubbaka*);
(14) a fissured corpse (*vicchiddaka*);
(15) a mangled corpse (*vikkhāyitaka*);
(16) a dismembered corpse (*vikkhittaka*);
(17) a cut and dismembered corpse (*hatavikkhittaka*);
(18) a blood-stained corpse (*lohitaka*);
(19) a worm-infested corpse (*puḷavaka*);
(20) a skeleton (*aṭṭhika*).

3. Ten recollections (*anussati*) and mindfulnesses (*sati*):

(21) recollection of the *Buddha* (*Buddhānussati*);
(22) recollection of the *Dhamma* (*Dhammānussati*);
(23) recollection of the *Sangha* (*Sanghānussati*);
(24) recollection of morality (*sīlānussati*);
(25) recollection of liberality (*cāgānussati*);
(26) recollection of celestial beings (*devatānussati*);
(27) mindfulness of death (*maraṇasati*);
(28) mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*);
(29) mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*);
(30) recollection of the peace of *nibbāna* (*upasamānussati*).

4. Four divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*):

(31) *mettā-cetovimutti*: *samādhi* induced by loving-kindness (*mettā*);
(32) *karuṇā-cetovimutti*: *samādhi* induced by compassion (*karuṇā*);
(33) *muditā-cetovimutti*: *samādhi* induced by sympathetic joy (*muditā*);
(34) *upekkhā-cetovimutti*: *samādhi* induced by equanimity (*upekkhā*).

5. Four formless spheres (*arūpāvacara*):

(35) the sphere of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*);

(36) the sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*);
(37) the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*);
(38) the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception (*nevasaññā-n'āsaññāyatana*).

6. (39) The perception of the loathsomeness of food (*āhāre paṭikkūla saññā*).
7. (40) The analysis of the four physical elements (*catudhātuvavatthāna*).

2. By Way of Concentration (Samādhi)

The subjects of meditation are of two kinds: (1) those which induce only access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) and (2) those which induce both access and attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*). Of the forty *kammaṭṭhānas*, ten are only capable of inducing access concentration — they are: the first eight recollections (*anussati*), the perception of the loathsomeness of food (*āhāre paṭikkūla saññā*), and the analysis of the four physical elements (*catudhātuvavatthāna*). The other thirty are capable of inducing attainment concentration, or the concentration of absorption (*jhāna*).

3. By Way of Absorptive State (Jhāna)

Eleven of the subjects serve to induce all of the fine material, or form, absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*), both according to the fourfold and the fivefold systems — they are: the ten *kasiṇas* and mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*). The following eleven subjects are capable of inducing only the first *rūpajjhāna*: mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*) and the ten objects of impurity (*asubha*). The first three divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*) lead to the first three *rūpajjhānas*, while the fourth leads to the fourth *rūpajjhāna*. Finally, the four immaterial, or formless, spheres (*arūpāvacara*) lead to the four formless absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*), respectively.

4. By Way of Transcending (Samatikkama)

Viewed by way of transcending (*samatikkama*), the subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) are of two kinds: (1) those that transcend the constituent factor (*anga-samatikkama*) and (2) those that transcend the object (*ārammaṇa-samatikkama*). All those subjects of meditation that are capable of inducing three or four *rūpajjhānas* transcend the factors of each *jhāna*, in turn, in the process of higher attainment, for it is by the gradual elimination of the factors of the preceding *jhānas* that each higher *jhāna* is attained. In the case of the four formless spheres (*arūpāvacara*), however, it is the object itself of each absorption that is transcended with the passing from one *arūpajjhāna* to the next. As for the ten subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) that are capable of inducing

only access concentration, as well as those that are capable of inducing only the first form, or fine material, absorption (*rūpajjhāna*), no transcending takes place.

5. By Way of Extension (Vaddhana)

Among the forty subjects of meditation, it is only in the case of the *kasiṇas* that the mental object should be extended. For, in regard to the attainment of psychic powers, whatever space is suffused by the *kasiṇa* object, it is possible, within the limits of that space, to hear, with the aid of clairaudience, sounds normally inaudible, to see distant forms through clairvoyance, and to know the mental states of others. The mental objects of the remaining thirty subjects of meditation require no extension, for there is no special advantage in doing so.

6. By Way of Sign, or Mark (Nimitta)

According to the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*, there are three objects that are termed "*nimitta*", "sign", "mark", or "image" — they are: (1) *parikamma-nimitta*,[52] the "preliminary image", that is, the "mark" of preliminary exercise; (2) *uggaha-nimitta*, the "acquired image", "mental image", or "mirror image", that is, the "mark" developed into a mental representation of the preliminary image; and (3) *paṭibhāga-nimitta*, the "after-image", or "counterpart image", that is, the "mark" arising from the mental image as the meditation develops into the *jhāna* state. There are three levels of concentration corresponding to these three *nimittas*, namely: (1) *parikamma-samādhi* — "preliminary concentration", that is, the level of concentration that is present whenever one directs one's mind to any of the various objects of concentration; (2) *upacāra-samādhi* — "access", or "neighborhood concentration", that is, the level of concentration approaching absorption (*jhāna*); and (3) *appanā-samādhi* — "attainment concentration", that is, the transmutation of consciousness into the *jhāna* states.

Each of the forty subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), as it forms the definite object of concentration, is, in the preliminary stage, to be taken as a *parikamma-nimitta*. When this *nimitta* is thoroughly mastered, so that it remains in the mind as an abstract mental image of the object, it is known as the *uggaha-nimitta*. These two *nimittas* are the objects of *parikamma-samādhi* of the preliminary stage of meditation.

The *uggaha-nimitta* of twenty-two subjects of meditation, namely, the ten *kasiṇas*, the ten objects of impurity (*asubha*), mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*), and mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*), gives rise to the *paṭibhāga-nimitta*, the "after-image". The remaining eighteen subjects of meditation are of such a profound nature that they do not give rise to the sign of *paṭibhāga*. Twelve of the latter — the remaining eight recollections (*anussati*) and mindfulnesses (*sati*), the perception of the

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[52] The term "*parikamma-nimitta*" does not appear in the *Visuddhimagga*.

loathsomeness of food (*āhāre paṭikkūla saññā*), the analysis of the four physical elements (*catudhātuvavatthāna*), the sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*), and the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception (*nevasaññā-n'āsaññāyatana*) — have their own intrinsic nature as the mental object. The remaining six subjects of meditation — the four divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*) and the first and third formless spheres (*arūpāvacara*), namely, the sphere of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*) and the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*) — are not sufficiently defined to present either a sign or their intrinsic nature as a mental object. This is because the divine abodes are the qualities of the higher sentiments, based upon the immeasurable object or objects of the beings towards whom they are directed, so that their objects, being immeasurable, cannot be defined either by a sign or by a representation of any kind. The first and third formless spheres take the immaterial objects of space and nothingness, respectively. Hence, they can offer neither a sign nor their intrinsic nature as a representation to the mind.

Among the forty subjects of meditation, the first eight recollections, the perception of the loathsomeness of food, and the analysis of the four physical elements possess subjective qualities and, therefore, do not develop into *appanā-samādhi*. The practice of these subjects produces only *upacāra-samādhi*, or "access concentration", while the rest develop into both *upacāra-samādhi* and *appanā-samādhi*.

Thus, all of the forty subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) are capable of producing both the preliminary image (*parikamma-nimitta*) and the acquired image (*uggaha-nimitta*), as well as preliminary concentration (*parikamma-samādhi*) and access concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*). Except for the ten subjects that induce only *upacāra-samādhi*, all the rest will induce *appanā-samādhi*.

7. By Way of the Plane of Existence (Bhūmi)

Twelve of the subjects of meditation — the ten objects of impurity (*asubha*), the perception of the loathsomeness of food (*āhāre paṭikkūla saññā*), and mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*) — do not exist in the *deva* world (*deva-loka*). The same twelve, along with the mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*), do not exist in the *brahma* world (*brahma-loka*). In the formless world (*arūpa-loka*), none of the subjects of meditation exist except the four formless spheres (*arūpāvacara*). In the human world (*manussa-loka*), all of them exist.

8. By Way of Taking (Gahaṇa)

Nine *kasiṇas*, the air-*kasiṇa* (*vāyo-kasiṇa*) being omitted, and the ten objects of impurity (*asubha*), nineteen in all, are to be taken, or practiced, by means of the faculty of sight. The object of mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*) is to be taken both by sight and hearing. The object of the mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) is to be taken by

touch, while that of the remaining eighteen are to be taken by hearing. Five of the subjects of meditation — the fourth *brahmavihāra* (*upekkhā-cetovimutti*) and the four formless spheres (*arūpāvacara*) — should not be taken by beginners, for they should normally follow the third and fourth *jhānas*, respectively.

9. By Way of Cause (Paccaya)

Nine *kasiṇas*, the space-*kasiṇa* (*ākāsa-kasiṇa*) being omitted, are able to create, or become, the cause of the formless (*arūpa*) attainment. All ten *kasiṇas* lead to higher knowledge (*paññā*), together with superhuman achievements (*abhiññā*). The first three *brahmavihāras* are the cause of the fourth. One formless sphere is the cause of the next, and so on until the highest is reached. The sphere of neither perception nor non-perception (*nevasaññā-n'āsaññāyatana*) is the base known as "*nirodhasamāpatti*", "the entire cessation of the feelings and perceptions", which can be attained only by those who have reached the stages of *Anāgāmī* and *Arahat*. Meditation upon all of these subjects of meditation is the cause of happiness in the present lifetime, the growth of full knowledge, and a happy rebirth, until the attainment of *nibbāna*.

10. By Way of Befitting Character (Caritānukula)

Eleven of the subjects of meditation — the ten objects of impurity (*asubha*) and mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*) — are suitable for a person of a lustful nature. Eight of the subjects of meditation — the four divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*) and the four color *kasiṇas* — are suitable for a person of a hateful, or irascible, nature. For those who are of a deluded or excitable nature, the only suitable subject is mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*). The first six recollections are suitable for those of a faithful nature, while four subjects — (1) mindfulness of death (*maraṇasati*), (2) recollection of the peace of *nibbāna* (*upasamānussati*), (3) the perception of the loathsomeness of food (*āhāre paṭikkūla saññā*), and (4) the analysis of the four physical elements (*catudhātu-vavatthāna*) — are suitable for those of an intellectual, or intelligent, nature. The remaining *kasiṇas* and the four formless spheres (*arūpāvacara*) are suitable for all kinds of dispositions. In estimating the value of these forty subjects of meditation (*kamma-ṭṭhāna*), the above assessment has been made in order to secure the maximum suitability of the various subjects for the individual character and to provide a subject diametrically opposed to it, thus counteracting its undesirable tendencies. But, it is nevertheless true to say that there is no subject of meditation that does not purify the mind from greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), and develop, instead, faith, knowledge, and wisdom.

These forty subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) have, therefore, been classified according to their power to aid the psychological development of the individual.

These forty subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) have, therefore, been classified according to their power to aid the psychological development of the individual.

The teacher who gives instruction by the way of concentration (*samādhi*) and by the way of befitting character (*caritānukula*) should examine the mental disposition and character of the disciple. If the teacher does not possess the knowledge that would enable him to determine the mental disposition and character intuitively, he should question the disciple in terms of the distinctive characteristics listed in Chapter 8 in order to determine his or her disposition.

Having determined the mental disposition and character of the disciple, the teacher should choose the most suitable subject of meditation and give instruction in it in one of three ways: (1) If the disciple has previously studied a *kammaṭṭhāna*, he should be asked to recite its formula at one or two sittings, after which the teacher should give further instructions concerning it. (2) If the disciple lives in the same place as the teacher, instruction should be given at every opportunity. (3) If the disciple wishes to study the subject and then go elsewhere, the teacher should teach it in all necessary details. In teaching the earth-*kasiṇa*, for instance, the teacher should explain its nine divisions: (1) the blemishes of the devise (*kasiṇa-dosa*); (2) the method of making the device (*kasiṇa-maṇḍala*); (3) the method of practice; (4) the three kinds of mark, or sign (*nimitta*); (5) the three levels of concentration (*samādhi*); (6) the seven suitable and unsuitable states; (7) tenfold skill in *appanā*; (8) moderation of effort in practice; and (9) the method of *appanā*. The disciple should be taught all of this before he or she begins.

From what has been said, it can be seen that the disciple, having approached a qualified teacher who can give him or her a subject of meditation, should entrust himself or herself to the *Buddha* and to his or her teacher and, with firm resolution, should ask for a *kammaṭṭhāna*. The *kammaṭṭhāna* should be twofold: (1) it should be universally beneficial (*sabbatthaka kammaṭṭhāna*), and (2) it should be specific (*pārihāriya*) to the individual character (*carita*). For example, concentration induced by loving-kindness (*mettā-cetovimutti*), mindfulness of death (*maraṇasati*), and perception of impurity in regard to the physical body (*kāyagatāsati*) are beneficial to all and may be practiced together with any other subject. A special subject, selected because it is suited to the particular disposition of the individual disciple, is called "*pārihāriya*", for it is to be continually practiced so that it may become the proximate cause of reaching the higher goal.

To ensure success, the disciple should pursue: (1) the ten perfections (*pāramī*, or *pārimitā*);[53] (2) the goal of freeing the mind from craving, hatred, and ignorance; (3) the desire to renounce worldly attachments; (4) taking delight in solitude; and (5) the desire to escape from *saṁsāra*. The disciple who has aspired to fulfill these five ideals will be destined to gain the knowledge of self-enlightenment in one of three degrees: (1) as an *Arahat*; (2) as a "solitary" *Buddha* (*Pacceka Buddha*); or (3) as a "fully-enlightened", or "perfectly-enlightened", *Buddha* (*Sammāsambuddha*). ■

[53] The ten perfections (*pāramī*, or *pārimitā*) are: (1) generosity (*dāna*); (2) morality (*sīla*); (3) renunciation (*nekkhamma*); (4) wisdom (*paññā*); (5) energy (*viriya*); (6) patience (*khanti*); (7) truthfulness (*sacca*); (8) determination (*adhiṭṭhāna*); (9) loving-kindness (*mettā*); and (10) equanimity (*upekkhā*).

10

A Suitable Place for Meditation

The Buddhist scriptures tell us that the early disciples selected nine types of places for habitation, considering them the dwellings most suitable for the practice of meditation. They are all mentioned in the following passage (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 181; *Dīgha Nikāya* I, 71):

> *"Endowed with the noble virtue of moral discipline, restraint of the senses, mindfulness and self-control, and with noble contentment, one goes to a secluded dwelling (senāsana), a forest (arañña), the foot of a tree (rukkhamūla), a mountain (pabbata), a hillside (kandara), a rock cave (giriguhā), a cemetery (susāna), the depths of a jungle (vanapattha), an open field (abbhokāsa), or a heap of straw (palāla-puñja)."*

All of these come under the category of solitary dwellings for ascetics, and one or the other of them is chosen according to climatic conditions and the physical state of the disciple, or his particular temperament (*carita*). The types of dwelling given as most suitable for one who has undertaken the practice of *ānāpānasati* meditation are: (1) a forest; (2) the foot of a tree; or (3) an empty house (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 56; etc.). But, with regard to their dwellings, those who have taken ascetic vows[54] (*dhutanga*) should not live under shelter. Among the *dhutangas* mentioned in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* (V, 19) and described in the *Visuddhimagga* (59), four places — (1) a forest; (2) at the foot of a tree; (3) an open field; and (4) a cemetery — are given as the most suitable for an ascetic. These four places have special advantages for the disciple.

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[54] *Dhutanga*, "ascetic practices", "austerities", are strict observances recommended by the *Buddha* to Monks as a means to cultivate contentment, renunciation, energy, and the like. One or more of them may be observed for a shorter or longer period of time. The *Visuddhimagga* lists thirteen *dhutangas*: (1) wearing cloth taken from a dust-heap (*paṁsukūla*); (2) possessing only three robes; (3) obtaining food only by begging; (4) begging straight on from house to house; (5) eating food only at one sitting; (6) eating from one bowl only; (7) refusing food offered after the proper time; (8) living in a forest; (9) living at the foot of a tree; (10) living in the open air; (11) living in a cemetery; (12) being satisfied with whatever dwelling is offered; and (13) sleeping in a sitting position. In the Buddhist countries of Southeast Asia, it is common for Monks to undertake one or more of these austerities during the rains-residence, the three-month period during which Monks must reside in one place and cannot wander. Some of these austerities may also be observed by lay practitioners. Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), pp. 59—60.

1. Dwelling in a Forest

According to the explanation given in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* (III, 46), a forest embraces all that lies outside of a village and its precincts. The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* (*Vibhanga* 251) states that a forest begins when one passes the village outpost. But, in regard to ascetic practices, as explained according to the *suttantas*, a forest dwelling is said to be at least five hundred bow-lengths distant from the village boundary. The most important consideration is that the distance should be far enough away so that the disciple is not disturbed by the hustle and bustle of the town or village. On the other hand, it should be close enough so that he can obtain requisites and other necessities.

The following are the advantages of living in a forest: A disciple who lives in a forest can easily acquire concentration not yet acquired or can further improve that which has already been acquired. Moreover, his teacher will be pleased with him, just as the *Buddha* was pleased when He said (*Anguttara Nikāya* III, 343): "I am pleased with the forest-life of the Monk Nāgita." The mind of one who dwells in a forest is not distracted by undesirable objects. As he is sustained by the necessary qualification of moral purity, he is not overcome, when living in a forest, by the terrors that are experienced by those who are impure in word, thought, and deed, as stated in the Bhayabherava Sutta (Fear and Dread) (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 17ff.): "Putting aside all craving for life, he enjoys the blissful happiness of calm and solitude." As noted in the *Visuddhimagga* (I, 73):

> *Secluded, detached, and delighting in solitude, the Monk, by his forest-life, endears himself to the Blessed One. Living alone in the forest, he obtains that bliss that even the gods, including Indra, do not taste. Wearing but dust-heap cloth (paṁsukūla) as his garment, coming to the forest battle-field armed with other ascetic vows, he, before long, conquers Māra and his army. Thus should the wise delight in the forest-life.*

2. Dwelling at the Foot of a Tree

The disciple who chooses the foot of a tree as his abode should avoid certain types of trees: (1) a tree on the border between two countries; (2) a sacred tree (such as the *bodhi*-tree); (3) a resinous tree; (4) a fruit tree; (5) a tree in which bats live; (6) a tree that is hollow; or (7) a tree growing in the middle of a *vihāra*.

According to the *Vinaya Piṭaka* (I, 58): "One's renunciation (of home life) depends upon dwelling at the foot of a tree," for dwelling under a tree is a requisite for a Monk. Furthermore, it is "the best of all dwellings, for it is easily obtained and faultless (as regards need for care, duty, or attention)" (*Anguttara Nikāya* II, 26). It facilitates the perception of impermanence, exemplifying it in the continual change of the leaves, it eliminates the taint (*āsava*) of craving for a dwelling, it provides solitude, and it fulfills the ascetic virtue of simplicity (*Visuddhimagga* I, 75).

3. Dwelling in an Open Field

The disciple who rejects a roof and also the foot of a tree as his dwelling-place should live in an open field. He should dwell in the open air, in a shelter made of leaves, or in a tent, or in a hollow amid rocks but open to the sky. In reference to this life, we may cite the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (I, 199): "Like the deer, who walk without a care, the homeless Monks live untrammeled." Freedom from attachment, freedom from the cares and duties consequent upon residence in a house, the dispersal of sloth and torpor, the ability to go at will in any direction, a life led in conformity with ascetic simplicity — these are some of the advantages of living in the open air.

4. Dwelling in a Cemetery

Dwelling in a cemetery is especially suitable for those who practice meditation upon the ten "cemetery contemplations"[55] (*sīvathikā*) or upon the mindfulness of death (*maraṇasati*). But, of the different types of habitation, this is the most difficult and most dangerous. A Monk who chooses to dwell in a cemetery should inform the head of the *Sangha* or the mayor or chief authority of the town or village in order to guard against any danger that might befall him. During the day-time, he should note the object of his concentration, a swollen corpse, for example, so that it will not appear dreadful to him at night. Walking to and fro, he should look with half-closed eyes at the burning of a corpse. He should refrain from eating food such as fried meat, fish, and flour products.

Dwelling in a cemetery yields the following advantages: (1) attainment of mindfulness regarding death; (2) acquisition of the sign of the foul; (3) a life of vigilance; (4) elimination of sensual lust; (5) perpetual observation of the nature of the body; (6) disappearance of the pride of life; and (7) triumph over fear and terror.

Those who are unable to live in dwellings such as these are allowed to live in an *āvāsa*,[56] or monastery, in obedience to the *Vinaya* rules. But, according to the *Visuddhimagga*, there are eighteen types of monasteries that are unsuitable for meditation:

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[55] The "cemetery contemplations" (*sīvathikā*) refers to meditation upon the ten kinds of corpses found in ancient cemeteries and charnel grounds, where dead bodies were not buried or cremated and where flesh-eating animals and birds frequented. In modern times, it is no longer possible to obtain such corpses as subjects of meditation. The goal of these exercises is to create a concentrated and tranquil state of mind by arousing disgust for the carnal desires and detachment from them.

The cemetery contemplations (*sīvathikā*) are also called "meditation subjects of impurity" (*asubha kammaṭṭhāna*), or, simply, "Impurities" (*asubha*). According to the scriptures, the practice of the cemetery contemplations is exclusively Buddhist, and, inasmuch as it occurs in the *Vinaya* in connection with the third *pārājika* rule, it must have been introduced during the very early period of the teaching. The loathsomeness of the body was widely recognized among the sages of India, but the method of meditating upon a dead body has not yet been found in any Indian system other than Buddhism.

[56] *Āvāsa* means any "fixed abode", "residence", or "dwelling-place". In the case of Monks, it refers to a "monastery".

1. A large monastery, where one meets many persons with different shades of thought, dispositions, and responsibilities is unsuitable because, due to various circumstances, one may find that some chores or duties are being neglected, and, to fulfill them oneself would not leave sufficient time for meditation. There is also the possibility of continual disturbance.
2. In a new monastery, there may be much work to be done, and, if it were left undone, according to the *Vinaya* rules, the disciple would be blamed. But, if one does the work, meditation would be neglected.
3. In living in a dilapidated place, one would find much to repair, and, if this were left undone, the disciple would be blamed. But again, if one does the work, meditation would be neglected.
4. In a place where there is a well or fountain used by the public, the meditator would be disturbed by those who come for water.
5. In a monastery situated near a road or highway, visitors may arrive at any time during the day or night. In attending to their needs as one's duty, one may find insufficient time for meditation.
6. In a place where there are medicinal herbs of various kinds, the meditator will be disturbed by the people who come for them.
7. A similar hindrance may be found in a monastery where there is a flower-garden supplying the needs of many people.
8. A monastery in which there are various kinds of fruits, such as mango, rose-apple, and jack-fruit, will be a disturbing place for a meditator, because many people will come asking for fruit, or he will be disturbed by children coming to steal the fruit.
9. One who lives in a monastery of historical interest and considered by many as famous and worthy of veneration will be disturbed by the people who come to visit the place and to see the Monk in charge, regarding him as a saint, since he lives in such a sacred place.
10. A monastery situated in a town or village is unsuitable, for circumstances may present themselves that can give rise to temptations, and there may be many other hindrances as well.
11. In a woodland monastery, the meditator may be disturbed by those who come to collect firewood or to cut down trees for various purposes.
12. A monastery surrounded by farms or arable land is unsuitable, for the farmers and laborers may disturb the meditator.
13. Living in a place where there are persons of different views, opposed and inimical to each other, will be a hindrance to the meditator.
14. A monastery near a seaport or a trading center is unsuitable for meditation, because it is disturbed and made unpleasant by people engaged in commerce.
15. A monastery situated in a distant place, where the inhabitants have no faith in the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma*, and the *Sangha*, is unsuitable, for one may find difficulty in obtaining requisites and other necessities.

16. Living in a monastery on the boundary between two countries is unsuitable, for there is the danger of political disturbances.
17. A monastery located in undesirable surroundings is unsuitable, for there may be many dangers and perils.
18. If, in a monastery, there is no teacher or good friend (*kalyāṇa mitta*) available and it is not possible to obtain necessary advice and instructions, this is to be regarded as a great disadvantage.

Thus, these places are unsuitable because of their numerous faults, which would prove to be a hindrance. If any one of these places should chance to be free from these faults, it may be suitable. Otherwise, the disciple should leave such places and seek out a dwelling endowed with the following five qualities (*Anguttara Nikāya* V, 15):

1. It should be neither too far from nor too near to a town or village;
2. It should be easily accessible;
3. It should not be crowded by day;
4. It should be calm and quiet at night, free from annoyance and vermin, where there is no difficulty in obtaining the requisites of life;
5. It should be a place where a good friend (*kalyāṇa mitta*) is available.

The acquisition of a dwelling endowed with these five qualities is termed "*āvāsa-sappāya*", that is, a "suitable residence", "suitable abode", or "suitable dwelling-place", and it is indispensable for the immediate success of meditation.

The disciple who has abandoned all worldly possessions and embraced the holy life (*brahmacariya*), having given up the state of a householder, should seek out a place endowed with the qualities explained above. Those, however, who, while still living the household life, yet wish to practice meditation, should also try to find a place that is conducive to meditation, such as a *Dharma* center, a retreat center, or some other facility free from faults such as those listed above. Failing to find such a place, they should dedicate a separate room in their home to the purpose of meditation. The special qualities described above as most suitable for meditation are given particular consideration, because they offer definite advantages to those in quest of liberation. But, the earnest seeker, the ardent disciple, wherever he or she happens to live, will find a suitable place for his or her purposes. ■

11

Bodhipakkhiya Bhāvanā

Meditation, which is the means by which self-enlightenment is obtained, implies not only a systematic thinking upon a given subject, but also a systematic development of the higher qualities that tend to produce supramundane wisdom, which, in its turn, makes enlightenment possible. The scriptures, therefore, emphasize that a disciple should have developed the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiya*) in the course of his or her preliminary training. In his last discourse, the *Buddha* exhorts His disciples in the following manner (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no 16):

> *"Therefore, now, Monks, those doctrines which have been comprehended and taught by Me you should grasp, follow, practice, and cultivate in order that this religious life may be permanent and long-lasting, that it may be advantageous to many, out of compassion for the world, bringing profit, happiness, and advantage to gods and men. And what are those doctrines comprehended and taught by Me that you should learn …? They are:*
>
> 1. *The four foundations of mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna);*
> 2. *The four right efforts (sammappadhāna);*
> 3. *The four bases of psychic power (iddhipāda);*
> 4. *The five spiritual faculties (indriya);*
> 5. *The five powers (bala);*
> 6. *The seven factors of enlightenment (bojjhanga);*
> 7. *The Noble Eightfold Path (aṭṭhangika magga)."*

These seven groups contain the thirty-seven principles that have already been mentioned in Chapter 5. It is in these seven groups that the whole teaching of the *Buddha* is said to have been summarized as a compendium of the *Dhamma* known as "*bodhi-pakkhiyādhammā*", the "requisites of enlightenment", or the "qualities constituting or contributing to enlightenment". The Mahāsakuludāyi Sutta (The Greater Discourse to Sakuludāyin) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 77) gives them in a list of a disciple's practices, being certain parts of the whole system of religious training. In the Mahāvagga of the *Saṁyutta Nikāya*, they are treated separately as independent methods of training, and they are there included in the *saṁyuttas*, or collections of teachings arranged in various orders. It is noteworthy that the seven groups are repeated in different forms in the teachings.

The term "*bodhipakkhiya*", however, is not used in the scriptures to include all thirty-seven, although it does occur in the Commentaries in that sense: *satta-tiṁsa bodhipakkhiyā-dhammā*, "the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment". The word occurs in the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (V, 227), but, it is applied there to the fourth group, that of the five spiritual faculties (*indriya*), which are said to be conducive to enlightenment (*bodhāya saṁvattanti*). In an explanation of the preliminary training for meditation, the *Vibhanga* (p. 244) uses the term, as, for example: *bodhipakkhiyānaṁ bhāvanānuyutto viharati*, "he abides applying himself to the practice of the requisites of enlightenment." But, it is applied (*Vibhanga*, p. 249) to the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*) alone, the sixth of the seven groups. In the Commentary, it is stated: "Though all the thirty-seven principles are virtually included in the 'requisites of enlightenment' (*bodhipakkhiyā-dhammā*), the 'seven factors of enlightenment' (*bojjhanga*) are set forth alone because of their special ability of arising together in one object during the practice of *lokiya jhāna* as well as *lokuttara*." Apart from these two cases, no other evidence has yet been found to indicate that the seven groups were included under this term in the Pāḷi Canon.

According to the testimony of the scriptures, these principles are taught more or less independently at first, and they are said to be conducive to higher knowledge (*abhiññā*), perfect enlightenment (*sambodha*), and final liberation (*nibbāna*). Moreover, they are the awakening within a person of hitherto dormant qualities, and they are the result of the deliberate expansion of the field of religious training. A disciple should practice them from the very beginning of his or her training, for, from the first, they give entrance to the path of enlightenment, and, in the end, by producing a unified whole, they constitute enlightenment itself. Hence, they have justly come to form the summary of Buddhist teaching under the name of "*bodhipakkhiyā-dhammā*". It is essential to practice them if immediate success in higher meditation is to be achieved. They are therefore included in the *Jhāna Vibhanga* (*Vibhanga*, p. 244) as part of the early training.

1. The Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Satipaṭṭhāna)

These are identical with the four foundations of mindfulness given in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta (The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 22), where they are described as a complete method for attaining *nibbāna*. A detailed account of this most important scheme of training is given there. The practice is recommended as a self-sufficient method of training, and special emphasis is placed upon its importance for beginners. A short summary of the four foundations of mindfulness is given with the following exhortation (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 144):

> *"Monks, those who are novices, not long come into this religious discipline, should be induced, advised, and established in the four foundations of mindfulness: 'Come, friends, abide contemplating the body with the mind ardent, self-possessed, established, tranquil, concentrated, well purified, for gaining insight*

> *into the body as it is'."* (The same is repeated for the remaining three: the contemplation of feelings, the state of the mind, and the contents of the mind.)

This exhortation shows that a disciple should be trained in this practice from the very beginning of his or her training.

The principle that is to be developed in this practice is mindfulness (*sati*), which is a universally important factor in the work of mental training. The method described here for its development is the contemplation of the body[57] (*kāya*), feelings[58] (*vedanā*), the state of the mind[59] (*citta*), and the contents of the mind,[60] or mind objects (*dhamma*), which must be realized "as they are". That is to say, a disciple should establish mindfulness upon compounded things, considering their intrinsic nature, regardless of such relative concepts such as "I", "me", or "mine", "he" or "she". In this connection, mindfulness means the awareness of the facts concerning the natural characteristics of these mental and physical objects, and it should be established in opposition to that forgetfulness and unawareness of the facts that cause one to believe that they are "self" and abiding entities. To the ordinary uninstructed mind, the combination of these four compounds (body, feelings, state of the mind, and mind objects) appears to be permanent and to possess individuality — that is the delusion (*moha*, or *avijjā*) which leads to the repetition of birth, death, and sorrow. Analytical reflection (*anupassanā*) upon these four compounds reveals the fact that they are void of any substantial reality. The awareness of this truth puts an end to the erroneous views about individuality that are based upon illusory conceptions, and this enables a disciple to escape from the world of changing phenomena. These are the four objects upon which a practitioner of meditation should establish his or her mindfulness. Hence, they are called "foundations of mindfulness" (*satipaṭṭhāna*).

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[57] The contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*) consists of the following exercises: mindfulness with regard to in-and-out-breathing (*ānāpānasati*); mindfulness of the four postures (*iriyāpatha*); mindfulness and clarity of consciousness (clear comprehension) (*satisampajañña*); reflection on the thirty-two body parts (*kāyagatāsati*); analysis of the four physical elements (*dhātuvavatthāna*); and the cemetery contemplations (*sīvathikā*).

[58] The meditator clearly perceives all feelings (*vedanānupassanā*) that arise in him or her: agreeable and disagreeable feelings of body and mind, sensory and supersensory feelings, indifferent feelings, etc.

[59] The meditator further perceives and understands any state of consciousness or mind (*cittānupassanā*), whether it is greedy or not, hateful or not, deluded or not, cramped or distracted, developed or undeveloped, surpassable or unsurpassable, concentrated or not concentrated, liberated or not liberated.

[60] Concerning mind objects (*dhammānupassanā*), the meditator knows whether one of the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) is present in him or not, knows how it arises, how it is overcome, and how, in the future, it will no longer arise. He knows the nature of the five aggregates (*khandha*), how they arise, and how they are dissolved. He knows the twelve bases of mental activity (*āyatana*): the eye and visual object; the ear and audible object; the nose and odoriferous object; the tongue and flavorful object; the body and tactile object; the mind and mental object. He knows the fetters (*saṁyojana*) based upon them, knows how they arise, how they are overcome, and how, in the future, they will no longer arise. He knows whether one of the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*) is present in him, knows how it arises, and how it comes to full development. Finally, he understands the Four Noble Truths according to reality. Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), pp. 194—196.

When mindfulness is established upon these four objects by means of contemplation, it clarifies a confused memory and keeps other good qualities in the mind steady and active, not allowing them to be weakened or scattered. Those disciples who are supported and protected by mindfulness will soon attain success in their practice.

2. The Four Right Efforts (Sammappadhāna)

> *"Herein, a Monk puts forth the energy, prods the mind, and struggles to prevent unarisen unwholesome mental states from arising.*
>
> *"He puts forth the energy, prods the mind, and struggles to abandon unwholesome mental states that have already arisen.*
>
> *"He puts forth the energy, prods the mind, and struggles to develop wholesome mental states that have not yet arisen.*
>
> *"He puts forth the energy, prods the mind, and struggles to maintain and perfect wholesome mental states that have already arisen."* (*Majjhima Nikāya* II, 11; *Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 244; *Vibhanga* 208.)

These are the four right (*sammā*), or supreme, efforts (*sammappadhāna*) that lead to enlightenment. They are given, not as a unified scheme of meditation, but as the method of exercise in support of the practice of meditation. They are therefore called "*samādhi-parikkhāra*", the "requisites of concentration" (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 301). In the development of higher consciousness, a disciple must make every effort to divert his or her mind from evil thoughts, defined as greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), which are the root of all bad action, whether of body, speech, or mind. This method of mental purification is elaborated upon in the following passage (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 120):

> *"Monks, when an evil thought arises in the mind, and the mind dwells upon it and becomes preoccupied with unwholesome ideas, lust, hatred, or delusion, strive to create in the mind wholesome ideas of an opposite nature. In this way, the evil thought will decay and disappear. With its disappearance, the mind will be established, controlled, unified. Then, if unwholesome ideas persistently arise, with teeth clenched, with tongue pressed against the palate, and with all your strength, you must strive to constrain and coerce the mind so that the evil ideas will be eliminated and the mind become pure."*

This effort towards the supreme goal is known as "*sammappadhāna*" and consists of four types, each of which has its own particular purpose. Through the development of physical and mental energy, which he or she directs to the right purpose, a disciple is able to prevent his or her mind from turning to evil thoughts, to purge his or her mind of evil thoughts, and to apply it to the acquisition and development of good and higher qualities.

Right effort, when thus applied, becomes the guiding principle of both spiritual and material progress, and, as a requisite of enlightenment, it preserves the plasticity that makes self-illumination possible.

3. The Four Bases of Psychic Power (Iddhipāda)

> *"Herein, a Monk develops the basis of psychic power, combined with the concentration of will and the mental elements of [right] effort.*
>
> *"Herein, a Monk develops the basis of psychic power, combined with the concentration of energy and the mental elements of [right] effort.*
>
> *"Herein, a Monk develops the basis of psychic power, combined with the concentration of thought and the mental elements of [right] effort.*
>
> *"Herein, a Monk develops the basis of psychic power, combined with the concentration of investigation and the mental elements of [right] effort."* (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 103; *Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 275; etc.)

The formulas given above show that concentration produced by the power of will (*chanda*), of energy (*viriya*), of thought (*citta*), and of investigation (*vimaṁsā*), together with right effort (*sammappadhāna*), constitute the four bases of psychic manifestation, which are termed "*iddhi*", literally, "accomplishments". They are named "*iddhipāda*", the "bases", or "causes of *iddhi*". Generally speaking, they are the qualities of super-normal consciousness that gradually develop as one passes through the stages of *jhāna*. When they are developed together with other requisites of enlightenment, they tend to produce the illumination of higher knowledge as well as various psychic powers.

The practice of the four bases of psychic power (*iddhipāda*) is described in the following passage (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 276):

> *"These four bases of psychic power, Monks, when practiced and cultivated, are conducive to great result, to great blessing. And how, Monks, are the four bases practiced, how are they cultivated, and how are they conducive to great result and blessing?*
>
> *"Herein, Monks, a Monk practices the basis of psychic power combined with the concentration of will and the mental element of effort: 'Thus, my will will not be too lax and not too tense, not depressed inwardly nor distracted outwardly.'*
>
> *"He practices the basis of psychic power combined with the concentration of energy and the mental element of effort: 'Thus, my energy will not be too lax and not too tense, not depressed inwardly nor distracted outwardly.'*
>
> *"He practices the basis of psychic power combined with the concentration of mind and the mental element of effort: 'Thus, my mind will not be too lax and not too tense, not depressed inwardly nor distracted outwardly.'*

"He practices the basis of psychic power combined with the concentration of investigation and the mental element of effort: 'Thus, my investigation will not be too lax and not too tense, not depressed inwardly nor distracted outwardly. As before, so behind, as behind, so before; as below, so above, as above, so below; as by day, so by night, as by night, so by day.' Thus, with intellect open and not lax, he develops his mind so that it is enlightened."

Thus, the development of these four bases not only produces the power of controlling phenomenal elements, but also leads to supramundane intellection, and it is in this sense that they are regarded as *bodhipakkhiya* principles.

4. The Five Spiritual Faculties (Indriya)

The individual qualities of faith (*saddhā*), energy (*viriya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*), and full knowledge, or wisdom (*paññā*), are called "spiritual faculties" (*indriya*) in the sense of leading or controlling principles. They are explained as follows (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 196—197):

"And what, Monks, is the faculty of faith? Herein, Monks, the noble disciple is faithful. He believes in the enlightenment of the Tathāgata thus: the Blessed One, the Arahat, the Fully Enlightened One, endowed with knowledge and conduct, the Happy One, Knower of the World, Peerless Charioteer of men to be tamed, Teacher of gods and men, the Buddha, the Blessed One. This, Monks, is called the 'faculty of faith'.

"And what, Monks, is the faculty of energy? Here, Monks, the noble disciple abides exercising energy. Dispelling evil thoughts and acquiring good thoughts, he is steadfast, advancing steadily, not giving up the effort to produce good thoughts. This, Monks, is called the 'faculty of energy'.

"And what, Monks, is the faculty of mindfulness? Here, Monks, the noble disciple is mindful. Endowed with supreme skill in mindfulness, he remembers and calls to mind what has been done, what has been spoken in the distant past. This, Monks, is called the 'faculty of mindfulness'.

"And what, Monks, is the faculty of concentration? Here, Monks, the noble disciple, making relinquishment the object of his thought, acquires concentration, acquires one-pointedness of mind. This, Monks, is called the 'faculty of concentration'.

"And what, Monks, is the faculty of wisdom? Here, Monks, the noble disciple is possessed of wisdom. He is endowed with the knowledge of the arising and passing away [of phenomena], the noble knowledge of detachment [from the taints], and the knowledge leading to the complete destruction of suffering. This, Monks, is called the 'faculty of wisdom'."

When these five spiritual faculties manifest themselves in their full development, they rule the mind, controlling the conditions that are opposed to them, namely: skeptical doubt, idleness, negligence, distraction, and delusion. The mind, having transcended these detrimental tendencies and developed the higher qualities with the aid of these five spiritual faculties, becomes apt and fit for self-enlightenment. Hence, the five spiritual faculties are rightly termed "*bodhipakkhiya*". We find confirmation of this in the following passage (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 227):

> *"Monks, the faculty of faith is conducive to enlightenment; the faculty of energy is conducive to enlightenment; the faculty of mindfulness is conducive to enlightenment; the faculty of concentration is conducive to enlightenment; and the faculty of wisdom is conducive to enlightenment. Hence, they are called 'bodhipakkhiya', the 'requisites of enlightenment'."*

5. The Five Powers (Bala)

The term "five powers" refers to the same qualities as the "spiritual faculties" (*indriya*). They become powers (*bala*) when they are so strongly developed that they cannot be crushed by their opposite, inimical states. When they are developed, they lead to *nibbāna* — to quote the scriptures (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 249):

> *"Monks, there are these five powers. What are the five? The power of faith, the power of energy, the power of mindfulness, the power of concentration, and the power of wisdom. Herein, Monks, a Monk develops the power of faith in association with, or aiming at, detachment (viveka-nissitaṁ), absence of passion, cessation, and ending in relinquishment…* (Each of the remaining powers is then said to be developed in the same way.)
>
> *"Monks, just as the river Ganges flows to the east, slopes to the east, inclines to the east, even so, a Monk who develops the five powers and cultivates them flows to nibbāna."*

6. The Seven Factors of Enlightenment (Bojjhanga)

(1) Mindfulness (*sati*), (2) investigation of the truth (*dhamma-vicaya*, that is, "seeking knowledge", here implying the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths), (3) energy (*viriya*), (4) rapture (ecstasy, zest) (*pīti*), (5) tranquility (*passaddhi*), (6) concentration (*samādhi*), and (7) equanimity (*upekkhā*) are the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*). They are explained in the *Vibhanga* (p. 227) as follows:

> *"Herein, what is mindfulness as a factor of enlightenment? Here, a Monk is mindful. Endowed with supreme skill in mindfulness, he remembers and calls*

to mind what has been done and what has been spoken in the distant past. This is called 'mindfulness' as a factor of enlightenment.

"Abiding thus mindful, he investigates the truth with wisdom, examines it, and undertakes investigation. This is called 'investigation of the truth' as a factor of enlightenment.

"As he investigates the truth with wisdom, examines it, and undertakes investigation, his energy is set going and [remains] active. This is called 'energy' as a factor of enlightenment.

"When his energy has been set going, rapture arises, free from anything sensual. This is called 'rapture' as a factor of enlightenment.

"When his heart is filled with rapture, both his body and mind become tranquil. This is called 'tranquility' as a factor of enlightenment.

"When his body is tranquil and happy, his mind becomes concentrated. This is called 'concentration' as a factor of enlightenment.

"When his mind is concentrated, he looks [upon all phenomena] with complete equanimity. This is called 'equanimity' as a factor of enlightenment."

These seven factors are conducive to *bodhi* (*bodhāya saṁvattanti*), "spiritual wisdom", or "enlightenment", and are, therefore, termed "*bojjhanga*",[61] "factors (*anga*) of enlightenment (*bodhi*)" (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 72).

We are told in the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (V, 63) that a disciple who has reached the stage of complete moral purity should practice these factors with the intention of attaining detachment, dispassion, cessation, and relinquishment. When these factors are thus put into practice, they lead to the complete destruction of all the taints (*āsava*) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, Sabbāsava Sutta [All the Taints], no. 2).

7. The Noble Eightfold Path (Aṭṭhangika Magga)

"The Blessed One said: 'What, Monks, is the Noble Eightfold Path? It is, indeed, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration'." (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 8.)

This Noble Eightfold Path may be explained as follows:

1. Of these, right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) comprises the knowledge of suffering (*dukkha*), the cause (*samudaya*) of suffering, the cessation (*nirodha*) of suffering, and the path (*magga*) leading to the cessation of suffering. This fourfold knowledge is linked with the Four Noble Truths, and it also includes: (1) knowledge of *kamma*, (2) knowledge of insight, and (3) knowledge of the noble

[61] Buddhist Sanskrit *bodhyaṅga*, "factors of enlightenment".

path, that is, the four stages of sainthood. Of these, the first two are mundane (*lokiya*), while the last is supramundane (*lokuttara*).

2. Right intention (*sammā-sankappa*) is threefold: (1) renunciation, free from craving, (2) goodwill, free from ill will, and (3) compassion, free from cruelty. These three include all wholesome thoughts, and, when they are practiced separately in the early stages, they are said to be mundane (*lokiya*), but, when they are developed to the transcendental stage, they are said to be supramundane (*lokuttara*).

3. Right speech (*sammā-vācā*) is fourfold: refraining from: (1) false speech, (2) malicious speech, (3) harsh speech, and (4) frivolous talk. In its positive aspect, it implies speaking the truth, pleasant speech, and words that are useful. In the preliminary stage, right speech constitutes moral purity in relation to verbal discipline, while, in the higher stage of development, it implies refraining from, or absolute cessation of, false speech, vulgar speech, sarcasm, gossip, and idle chatter.

4. Right action (*sammā-kammanta*) is fourfold: refraining from: (1) taking life, (2) taking what is not freely given, (3) sexual misconduct (adultery, rape, seduction), and (4) intoxicating drinks and drugs causing heedlessness. In its positive aspects, it implies the actions of goodwill, generosity, and celibacy. In the early stages, it constitutes moral discipline in connection with the mind, while, in the higher stage of development, it implies the total abstinence from unwholesome deeds.

5. Right livelihood (*sammā-ājiva*) means abandoning any form of livelihood that causes harm and suffering to oneself and/or others and earning one's living by a means that is suited to one's requirements. Specifically, the following activities are mentioned as wrong forms of livelihood: soothsaying, trickery, dishonesty, usury, and trading in weapons, meat, living beings, intoxicants, or poison. Right livelihood implies adherence to the rules of right living and abstinence from violating them for the sake of earning one's living. In the higher stage, this implies total abstinence from wrong means and improper modes of living.

6. Right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*) is the same as the four right efforts (*sammappadhāna*). It is the fourfold effort to put forth the energy, to prod the mind, and to struggle:

   a. To prevent unarisen unwholesome mental states from arising;
   b. To abandon unwholesome mental states that have already arisen;
   c. To develop wholesome mental states that have not yet arisen;
   d. To maintain and perfect wholesome mental states that have already arisen.

In other words, it is the fourfold effort that we make to overcome and avoid fresh bad actions by body, speech, and mind; and the effort that we make in developing fresh actions of righteousness, inner peace, and wisdom, and in cultivating them to perfection.

7. Right mindfulness (*sammā-sati*) is the same as the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*). Right mindfulness consists of abiding self-possessed and attentive, contemplating according to reality:

   a. The body;
   b. Feelings;
   c. The state of the mind;
   d. The contents of the mind;

   seeing all as composite, ever-becoming, impermanent, and subject to decay. It is maintaining ever-ready mental clarity no matter what we are doing, speaking, or thinking and in keeping before our mind the realities of existence, that is, the impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactory nature (*dukkha*), and egolessness (*anattā*) of all forms of existence.

   When, as in this case, right effort and right mindfulness are associated with the Noble Eightfold Path as components necessary for the fulfillment of its purpose, they are regarded as "*magganga*", "constituents (*anga*) of the path (*magga*)". Though they are manifold in the preliminary stage owing to their varied activities, in the developed mind, they function as the complete energy and mindfulness that constitute the path.

8. Right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*) consists of gaining one-pointedness of mind (*ekaggatā*) and entering into and abiding in the four fine-material absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*) and the four immaterial absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*). Such a kind of mental concentration is one that is directed towards a morally wholesome object and always bound up with right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*), right effort (*sammā-vāyāma*), and right mindfulness (*sammā-sati*). Right concentration is the meditation practiced with the determination to attain *nibbāna*. When associated with the four supramundane stages, it is the culmination of the Noble Eightfold Path.

Thus, these thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiya*) contain the thirty-seven qualities required for the attainment of enlightenment. They have been set forth in seven groups according to their collective and individual attributes and separately enumerated as thirty-seven. But, considered in regard to their psychological factors, they may be summarized as follows (cf. *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*, p. 34):

1. Mindfulness	occurs in 8 places
2. Energy	occurs in 9 places
3. Will	occurs in 1 place
4. Mind	occurs in 1 place
5. Faith	occurs in 2 places
6. Wisdom	occurs in 5 places
7. Rapture	occurs in 1 place
8. Tranquility	occurs in 1 place
9. Concentration	occurs in 4 places
10. Equanimity	occurs in 1 place
11. Right intention	occurs in 1 place
12. Right speech	occurs in 1 place
13. Right action	occurs in 1 place
14. Right livelihood	occurs in 1 place

In a disciple's early training, these requisites are developed as mundane qualities, from time to time, in the course of meditation. With the attainment of Arahatship, they occur as supramundane qualities, constituting the self-enlightenment whereby a disciple has completed the long course of training for the realization of *nibbāna*. ■

12

Time and Posture for Meditation

The mind, like the body, works more effectively in a settled routine, and a mental discipline such as concentration (*samādhi*) necessitates the adherence to unvarying habits throughout the practice of meditation (*bhāvanā*). In the field of meditation, moreover, even strenuous and discerning practitioners must adopt fixed and regular times for their mental exercises during the early stages of their training, for the aim of this practice is more easily attained by those who are regular and continuous practitioners (*sātaccakāri*).

Time for Meditation

The best periods for meditation are just before dawn, noon, and just after sunset, and, judged upon the evidence of the personal experiences of the immediate disciples of the *Buddha*, they are accepted as the most propitious. The time just before dawn is, for many reasons, better than the other two. This time is called "*brahmamuhūrta*", the "divine moment", and is the period of spiritual awakening, a fact shown by the *Buddha's* enlightenment. Furthermore, there is considerable advantage, from the physical point of view, in reserving early hours of the day for spiritual training. This is usually the period of bodily calmness and quiescence, and the mind is then fresh after a night's rest, so that it is possible to achieve the mental serenity that enables the mind to advance along the path to concentration.

But if, for one reason or another, a practitioner finds it impractical to meditate just before dawn, then he or she should choose noontime. This time is specifically mentioned in the scriptures as a suitable time for meditation. For example (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 71; etc.): "After his meal, when he has returned from receiving alms, he sits down cross-legged, upright, setting mindfulness in front of him."

It has, therefore, become customary for a Monk to begin a period of meditation after his noonday meal. He thus has the advantage of being able to continue the practice for a longer period without interruption. If he lives in a monastery, he must conform to the disciplinary rules and fulfill other religious responsibilities, including going in quest of food before noon. When he has finished his meal and discharged his various other responsibilities, he should sit down to meditate. According to the *Visuddhimagga*, the practitioner should allow an hour to elapse after eating before starting to meditate, so that he or she is not overcome by drowsiness. Some experienced meditators believe noon to

be the most powerful moment of all, for it is the pinnacle of the day, when the cosmic forces reach their zenith. For this reason, noontime has been chosen as the moment for linking up thought with the cosmic forces.

Evening, being the junction of day and night, is also considered a powerful time for meditation. The forces of nature, which wax from morning to noon and wane from noon to midnight, come to a restful state at nightfall. This moment provides a calm atmosphere that lasts longer than that of the early morning, and meditation begun at this time can be continued through the long stillness until it produces great results, because physical calm and quiescence bring mental concentration.

But the ardent disciple who is eager to fulfill the purpose of his religious life should continue practicing by day and night, irrespective of these particular periods. Thus, we find the statement (*Majjhima Nikāya* III, 135; cf. also *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 273—274):

> *"Monks, you must train yourself to be vigilant; by day, in sitting down or pacing to and fro, purify your mind from hindrances; in the first watch of the night, in sitting down or pacing, purify your mind from hindrances; in the middle watch of the night, you should lie down in lion-like posture (sīha-seyyā) on your right side with foot resting on foot, mindful and self-possessed, having decided the hour at which to awaken; in the last watch of the night,*[62] *after you have arisen, purify your mind from hindrances in sitting down and pacing to and fro. Thus, you should train yourself to be vigilant."*

This method of training ensures that the practitioner will be regular in his or her practice and yet take sufficient rest to refresh the body. It also enables him or her to control sleep and inactivity in the body, which, itself, can become a hindrance to spiritual progress. This training is called "*jāgariyānuyoga*", "applying oneself to vigilance".

Posture

The usual ascetic posture is sitting down cross-legged, and this was the position used by the *Buddha* when He attained enlightenment. This posture is, therefore, regarded as affording the means whereby one realizes complete enlightenment, or Buddhahood. Its Sanskrit name is *Buddhāsana*, the "*Buddha* posture", or *vajrāsana*,[63] the "diamond throne", upon which the *Buddha* conquered Māra, the Evil One. In the scriptures, it is

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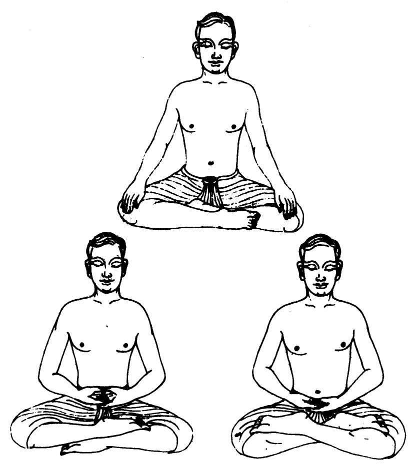
[62] According to the *Dinacariyāva*, a Sinhalese manual that describes the daily routine of the monastic life, which prevails to this day, a practitioner should awaken before sunrise, that is, about four o'clock in the morning. This period is regarded as the best for spiritual practices, and the tradition is that every *Buddha* attains enlightenment at this hour of the last watch of the night.

[63] The Buddhist tradition is that the *Buddha* sat down at the foot of the *bodhi*-tree on grass (supposedly *kusa*-grass) offered by a Brahmin, a grass-dealer named Sotthiya, and attained enlightenment on the same seat. Inasmuch as this grass was called "*vajra*", this seat was named "*vajrāsana*" after it.

described by the phrase (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 71, II, 291; *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 56; *Vinaya* I, 119; *Vibhanga* 252; etc.): *Pallankaṁ ābhujitvā, ujuṁ kāyaṁ paṇidhāya, parimukhaṁ satiṁ upaṭṭhapetvā*, "he sits down assuming a cross-legged position, placing the body upright, setting mindfulness in front [of him]." The Commentaries explain *pallanka* as "*urubaddhāsana*", "the position that is assumed when one sits down cross-legged". This posture is represented in the seated image of the *Buddha*, which is called *samādhipiḷima*, "the image of the meditation posture", in Sinhalese.

When this posture is assumed, the right leg is crossed over the left; the feet are resting upon the upper portion of the thighs; the soles are turned upward; the hands are placed just below the level of the navel, with the bend of the wrists pressed against the thighs, bracing the upper part of the body; the spinal column is straight, like a pile of coins, one coin on top of another. The diaphragm is expanded to its maximum fullness; the chin is up; the sight is fixed on the tip of the nose or else straight in front (as implied by *parimukhaṁ satiṁ upaṭṭhapetvā*, "setting mindfulness in front [of him]").

This posture is recommended for general use in meditation, and, in the practice of mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*), it is necessary to assume this posture, for, otherwise, the breathing cannot be grasped as the mental image of meditation in its regular and normal form. It is, therefore, definitely associated in the scriptures with that practice. A passage in the *Majjhima Nikāya* (III, 135), however, gives walking to and fro as an alternative. The recommended sitting postures are illustrated below:



According to the *Visuddhimagga*, a disciple who practices the *kasiṇa* meditation should sit on a small chair comfortably arranged when he or she gazes at the *kasiṇa* device. Once the mental object is grasped, he or she may meditate in any of the above postures that may be convenient and in which he or she can remain for a long period of time without physical discomfort. In the practice of the *asubha* meditation, a disciple should sit or stand gazing at the object of *asubha*, and, after attaining the image (*nimitta*), he or she may continue his or her practice in another posture.

There are, however, no mandatory rules laid down concerning time and posture for meditation. One is free to choose any time and any posture that may be convenient for him or her, as long as the back is kept perfectly straight. But, once chosen, he or she should adhere to a set routine from the very beginning of his or her training. ■

PART TWO

The Forty Subjects of Concentration

13

Kasiṇa Bhāvanā

General Discussion

As has been shown in the lists of various subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), the scheme of *kasiṇa bhāvanā* contains ten separate devices of contemplation, grouped under the name *kasiṇa*, or *kasiṇāyatana*, which have been used as a means of inducing absorption (*jhāna*). In the *Anguttara Nikāya* (I, 41), the cultivation of the *jhānas* through one or more of the ten *kasiṇas* is cited as an attribute of the faithful follower of the *Buddha*:

> *"O Monks, a Monk who practices the [jhāna of] the earth-kasiṇa (paṭhavī-kasiṇa) even for a moment, for the duration of the snap of the fingers, is said to be the Monk who does not live empty of jhāna, who follows the Master's teaching, who acts upon His advice, and who [rightly] partakes of the alms offered by the country or the pious. How much more they who practice it more."* (The same statement is repeated for the other *kasiṇas*.)

Furthermore, we learn from the scriptures that there were many among the early disciples of the *Buddha* who attained the perfection of knowledge (*paññā*) through this practice.

This method of *kasiṇa* meditation, as it is expounded in the scriptures, seems to be exclusively Buddhist, for it has not yet been found as a teaching or a practice in any of the non-Buddhist schools. Nevertheless, there are references in the discourses pointing to its being the practice of some pre-Buddhist recluses. In the *Anguttara Nikāya* (V, 46), Kāli Upāsikā, a female devotee, asks the Elder Mahā Kaccāna the reason why the *Buddha* alone was the incomparable Master, as stated in the following verse of the Kumāripañha (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* I, 126):

> *"Having conquered the army of the pleasant and agreeable, meditating alone, I discovered bliss, the attainment of the goal, the peace of the heart. Therefore, I do not make friends with people, nor will I form any intimate ties."*

The Elder Mahā Kaccāna replies:

"Sister, some recluses and Brahmins have also accomplished the quest for happiness up to the attainment of [the jhāna of] the earth-kasiṇa (paṭhavī-kasiṇa), thinking that to be the end. But, the Buddha realized its incompleteness, the release from it, and the knowledge of the insight with regard to the right path and wrong path." (The same is said of the other *kasiṇas*.)

In the Pañcattaya Sutta (The Five and Three) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 102), where the bases of erroneous conceptions are explained, the consciousness-*kasiṇa* (*viññāṇa-kasiṇa*) is mentioned: "Some expound the theory of eternity, exclaiming '*viññāṇa-kasiṇa* is immeasurable and permanent'." The same idea with regard to *viññāṇa-kasiṇa* is also mentioned in the *Anguttara Nikāya* (V, 60), where we find: "Monks, these are the ten *kasiṇāyatanas* … Of them, *vinnāṇa* is the highest, but it is also transient."

Such passages indicate that this practice was recognized as existing in the life of earlier ascetics as the means of attaining psychic power, super-knowledge, and birth in the *brahma*-world. Yet, it differs from that of the Buddhist system, for its ultimate goal does not appear to have been entirely unworldly. Even in the Buddhist system, the *jhāna* induced by use of *kasiṇas*, as well as that attained through other methods of *samādhi* meditation, is not the only means of gaining perfection, nor is it indispensible. For example, it is not absolutely necessary for the attainment of Arahatship, for we read of those *Arahats* called "*sukkhavipassakā*",[64] literally, "dry-seers".

Definition of Terms

Kasiṇa

The word "*kasiṇa*" (Sanskrit *kṛtsna*) literally means "entire", "whole",[65] and, in the field of meditation, it is employed both as an adjective and as a noun, as, for instance, "*kasiṇāyatana*" ("the base, or object, of a *kasiṇa* exercise"), "*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*" ("earth-*kasiṇa*"), etc. The term is applied to earth, water, fire, air, blue, yellow, red, white, consciousness, and space, when they are taken as subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*). The Commentaries give the definition "*sakalaṭṭhena kasiṇaṁ*", "it is *kasiṇa* in the sense of 'entirety'," which means that each *kasiṇa* is to be taken as the "entire" representation of the quality appropriate to its corresponding element.

[64] *Sukkha* (Sanskrit *śuṣka*) is the past participle of the verb *sussati* "to be dry". Those who choose the *vipassanā* method and do not follow the *samādhi* method for inducing *jhāna*, attain Arahatship through strenuous effort in developing insight. They are called "dry-seers" (*sukkhavipassakā*), or "dry-visioned", in the sense of "undiluted" (with "*samādhi*-water"), or "not infused with the sweetness of *samādhi*". The following term is used in the same sense: "*sukkha-vipassanā*", "dry (method of) insight".

[65] However, it is seldom used in this sense in the scriptures. A rare example of such usage is found in the Brahmanimantana Sutta (The Invitation of a Brahmā) (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 328): *yāvatakaṁ tuyhaṁ kasiṇaṁ āyu tāvatakam*, "for a period as long as the whole of your life".

When used as a technical term in the scriptures, *kasiṇa* has three interpretations: (1) its *maṇḍala*, the "circle" used as a device, or artifice; (2) its *nimitta*, the "sign", "mark", or "mental image", obtained from contemplation of the device; and (3) the absorption (*jhāna*) attained by that *nimitta*.

Let us take as an example the earth-*kasiṇa* (*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*). In the first place, this signifies a circle (*maṇḍala*) of earth (*paṭhavī*), either naturally or artificially molded into a form suitable as a device (*kasiṇa*), to serve as a mechanical aid to concentration (*samādhi*) leading to absorption. It is regarded as an emblematic representation of the "whole" element of earth and is, therefore, called "*kasiṇa*". Secondly, the mental image (*nimitta*) acquired by gazing at the device is also called "*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*", since it is a mental visualization of the "entire" quality, that is, the extensiveness and solidity of the element of earth, apart from all limitation of quantity. This is what is implied by the following formula: "One visualizes *paṭhavī-kasiṇa*, above, below, around, in oneness, and immeasurable, etc." Thirdly, *paṭhavī-kasiṇa* implies the absorption (*jhāna*) attained by concentrating upon that *nimitta*.

Kasiṇāyatana

The ten *kasiṇas* are cited in the *Sutta Piṭaka* (*Dīgha Nikāya* III, 268, 290; *Majjhima Nikāya* II, 14; *Anguttara Nikāya* V, 46, 60; *Paṭisabhidāmagga* I, 6, 28, 95; etc.) with the word "*āyatana*" (as *dasa kasiṇāyatanāni*), denoting that it is the "field" (*khetta*), or "sphere", of the mind and thoughts. The word "*āyatana*" is a technical term used to express the psychological relation between mind and matter. It may be variously translated as "field", "sphere", "site", "cause", "source", "base", or "dwelling". For instance, the sense of sight (*cakkhu*) and the visible form (*rūpa*), from the fact of their being the site and cause of sensation, perception, etc., are called "*cakkhu-āyatana*" and "*rūpa-āyatana*", respectively. In like manner, the term "*āyatana*" is applied to the other senses and their objects. The ten *kasiṇas* can be classed as "*āyatana*" only because of their objective relation to the mind and thoughts, since they are the material and mental objects of the corresponding senses. The first eight *kasiṇas* pertain to the sense of sight and touch, and the last two to that of the mind. But, the *nimitta*, or "mental image", of all of them pertains to the mind itself. The Commentary on the *Nettippakaraṇa* adds a further meaning, for it states that they are also called "*āyatana*" in the sense of being the "bases" of the special happiness of the *yogins*. In later sources, *kasiṇa* is used alone as a technical term, without "*āyatana*", while the last two *kasiṇas*, namely, the space-*kasiṇa* (*ākāsa-kasiṇa*) and the consciousness-*kasiṇa* (*viññāṇa-kasiṇa*), are omitted.

As has been stated previously (Chapter 5), only eight *kasiṇas*, the last two being omitted, are given in the *Dhammasangaṇī* (202) as the means of inducing the form, or fine material, absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*). The nature of the two *kasiṇas* which have been omitted and the reason for their omission are commented upon by Buddhaghosa Thera in the *Aṭṭhasālini* (p. 186) as previously noted (Chapter 5). Only the first eight *kasiṇas* are given in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I, 48, 143, 149), where they refer to the states of material forms. The reason given in the corresponding Commentary for this omission is

that there is a certain ambiguity with regard to the space-*kasiṇa*, for it also implies the sphere of infinite space, the first formless, or immaterial, absorption (*arūpajjhāna*), while the consciousness-*kasiṇa* is identical with the second formless, or immaterial, absorption.

In the *Visuddhimagga*, these last two *kasiṇas* are replaced by the light-*kasiṇa* (*āloka-kasiṇa*) and the limited-space-*kasiṇa* (*paricchinnākāsa-kasiṇa*), thus preserving a total of ten *kasiṇas*. Although the light-*kasiṇa* is not mentioned in the scriptures in the list of *kasiṇāyatanas*, it is given in the Jhānavagga of the *Anguttara Nikāya*. This makes eleven *kasiṇas* in all. However, the Commentary makes no mention of such an addition. In an account of the manifestation of psychic powers, it is stated that those who possessed such powers used them to emit light from their bodies and to radiate this light to the external world. We shall also see that this power is one of the results of successful practice of the light-*kasiṇa* (*āloka-kasiṇa*). It should, therefore, be noted that this *kasiṇa* was, indeed, in use among the early Buddhists.

Kasiṇa-maṇḍala

Maṇḍala, literally, "circle", is the word used in the Commentaries for a *kasiṇa* device, or artifice. According to the Śri Lankan tradition, this may be a frame made of four sticks tied together, or a board, stone, or piece of ground prepared like a plowed field. The last three are usually divided by depressions, and, in each division so formed, a sample *kasiṇa* is placed. Some such stone *maṇḍalas* have been found in the ruins of Anurādhapura in Śri Lanka. This method of preparation and the manner of using this *maṇḍala* will be discussed later.

Kasiṇa-ārammaṇa and *Nimitta*

Ārammaṇa generally means an "object" of thought and is the expression used in the Commentaries for any object in the field of meditation. It is equivalent to *nimitta*, literally, a "sign", "mark", or "image" applied both to the objective and the subjective ideal of meditation. According to the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*, there are three types of *nimitta*: (1) *parikamma-nimitta*, "preliminary sign"; (2) *uggaha-nimitta*, "acquired sign"; and (3) *paṭibhāga-nimitta*, "counterpart sign".

The object (*ārammaṇa*) selected and meditated upon as a *kammaṭṭhāna* is termed "*parikamma-nimitta*", "the mark for preliminary attention", and it is common to all forty subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*). In the *kasiṇa* meditation, it is the *kasiṇa* device taken as the object of attention.

After it has been sufficiently contemplated upon, the *parikamma-nimitta* gives way to the "acquired sign", which is the thought impression and an exact mental copy of the original object, with all its faults (*kasiṇa-dosa*), perceived by the mind as a vivid reality, as though it were actually being seen by the eye. This mental image is termed "*uggaha-nimitta*", the term which can be used as equivalent to the mental image of the device visualized by constant practice. It has been variously rendered as the "sign to be grasped", "the mark for upholding", or "the acquired sign". In its literal sense, *uggaha* is

anything acquired through learning or studying, and it is here used in the sense of taking the image into the mind so that it is retained like something learned by heart. After the *uggaha-nimitta* has arisen in the mind, the meditator no longer needs to gaze at the *parikamma-nimitta*, the original device used in the preliminary stage.

The course of meditation upon these two *nimittas*, namely, the preliminary object of attention (*parikamma-nimitta*) and its mental duplicate (*uggaha-nimitta*), is termed "*parikamma-bhāvanā*", "preliminary meditation". The level of concentration practiced on both these *nimittas* is called "*parikamma-samādhi*", "preliminary concentration".

This preliminary concentration gradually divests the image of its limited form, color, and shape, which are called "*kasiṇa-dosa*", and turns into an abstract image. This abstract image is termed "*paṭibhāga-nimitta*", the "counterpart sign", or "after-image", which is no longer presented to the senses, or cognitive faculties, as a concrete object. But this image remains in the mind as an emblematic representation of the whole quality, or element, that it symbolizes. According to the *Visuddhimagga*, only twenty-two of the forty subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) are capable of generating a counterpart sign (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*), namely: the ten *kasiṇas*; the ten objects of impurity (*asubha*), or cemetery contemplations (*sīvathika*); mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*); and mindfulness with regard to the body (*kāyagatāsati*). In the case of the remaining eighteen subjects of meditation, the counterpart sign does not arise due to the profundity of the qualities they represent.

Bhūta-kasiṇa and *Vaṇṇa-kasiṇa*

In the later Commentaries, we find the first four *kasiṇas* called "*bhūta-kasiṇa*", for they correspond to the four elements (*mahābhūta*): earth, water, fire, and air. The following four *kasiṇas* are called "*vaṇṇa-kasiṇa*", for they correspond to the four colors: blue, yellow, red, and white. The remaining two *kasiṇas* correspond to light and space, respectively. We may therefore divide the ten *kasiṇas* (as given in the *Visuddhimagga*) as follows:

Four Elements	Four Colors	Light and Space
1. Earth-*kasiṇa*	5. Blue-*kasiṇa*	9. Light-*kasiṇa*
2. Water-*kasiṇa*	6. Yellow-*kasiṇa*	10. Space-*kasiṇa*
3. Fire-*kasiṇa*	7. Red-*kasiṇa*	
4. Air-*kasiṇa*	8. White-*kasiṇa*	

According to the *Yogāvacara's Manual* (p. 50), the first four *kasiṇas* are *bhūta-kasiṇa*, and the remaining six are *vaṇṇa-kasiṇa*. Here, the light-*kasiṇa* and space-*kasiṇa* are also regarded as *vaṇṇa-kasiṇas*, because they react upon the eye in the same manner.

As they appear in the forms given, the first eight *kasiṇas* lead to the fine material, or form, absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*), while the last two lead to the first two immaterial, or formless, absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*) (*Manorathpurani*, p. 286; Commentary on the *Netti-*

ppakaraṇa, p. 128). In the *Nettippakaraṇa* (p. 89), the first eight *kasiṇas* pertain to *samatha* or *samādhi* meditation, and the last two to *vipassanā* meditation. The *Anguttara Nikāya* Commentary gives all ten *kasiṇas* as becoming the bases of the fine material, or form, absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*), insight (*vipassanā*), higher knowledge (*aññā*), and the cessation of passions (*nirodha*).

It will be apparent that this scheme of *kasiṇa* meditation has been expounded as a definite form of meditation with the attainment of the path to *nibbāna* as its ultimate goal. Hereafter, we shall deal with the methods of practicing it as found in the Commentaries and following the tradition of the Theravādin School.

Description of Kasiṇa Bhāvanā Found in the *Visuddhimagga*

It is in the *Visuddhimagga* that the fullest account of *kasiṇa* meditation is found. Indeed, other Commentaries often refer to this work for details on the matter. The lengthy discussion found there, beginning with the subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), serves as a general introduction to the whole system of meditation, while a special treatment of each subject, including practical instruction and psychological details, is given in its due place. The following is an abstract from the *Visuddhimagga* of *kasiṇa bhāvanā*, beginning with the earth-*kasiṇa* (*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*).

Paṭhavī-kasiṇa

Practitioners who wish to attain absorption (*jhāna*) through the practice of the earth-*kasiṇa* (*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*) should first of all take up residence in a suitable place, as described in Chapter 10. They should then free themselves from all impediments, even minor ones — that is to say, they should have their hair, beard, and nails properly cut and groomed, wear clean and proper attire, have bathed, have few personal needs and be free mundane chores and other obligations, be living an ethically disciplined way of life, have a good understanding of the key elements of the practice, have eaten a proper diet, and have as few distractions in their lives as possible, including those involving interactions with strangers or other people. Having attended to these requirements, they should sit down in a meditation posture in a secluded place. Thereupon, they should intently gaze at the earth-*kasiṇa*, either artificially created or naturally occurring, until they obtain the mental image (*uggaha nimitta*).

The practice has been described as follows:

> *He who studies the earth-kasiṇa takes the sign in earth, prepared or unprepared, but with measure, not without measure, limited, not limited, with marks, not with marks, with boundary, not with boundary, with the size of a winnowing fan, a porringer, or a platter. He makes a careful study of that sign, keeps it well noted and well determined. Next, he perceives the advantages of it, considering it as a gem (ratana-saññi), and, regarding it with reverence, he binds his whole heart to*

> *that object with the firm resolution: "By means of this practice, may I be free from death and decay."*

When a person has enjoyed the benefits to be derived from the teaching of the *Buddha* in a former birth, or attained to the state of an ascetic sage (*isi*[66]) and is, thereby, able to enter into the fourth and fifth *jhānas*, it will not be necessary for him or her to make a special device of earth, for a plowed field or threshing-floor will serve the same purpose, just as it did for the Elder Mallaka. It is recorded that, as he was looking at a plowed field, the mental image of the field arose in him. He extended it, induced the five *jhānas*, and, cultivating insight upon that basis, attained Arahatship.

But, those who have had no previous experience should make the *kasiṇa* from scratch, according to the instructions received from their teacher, taking care to avoid the four faults. That is to say, it must not be made of any of the following four colors: blue, yellow (or golden), red, or white. The clay from which it is formed must not be any of these colors, inasmuch as they are the colors of other *kasiṇas*, but it should be of a light reddish brown, like the color that appears in the sky at dawn, or the color of the clay in the river Ganges. The frame upon which the clay disk is placed must not be too near one's residence,[67] for fear of interruption. There, they should make the framework, either movable or fixed, as may be convenient. If it is a movable frame, consisting of four sticks, the top should be covered with a piece of cloth or a mat, and, upon this, the clay should be spread, kneaded, and worked until it is of the proper consistency, and it should then be fashioned into a disk one span and four inches in diameter, about twelve inches in all. If the frame is fixed on the ground, it must be small at the bottom and broad at the top, like the pericarp of the lotus flower. If it is not possible to procure sufficient clay of the proper color, the body of the disk may be formed of any other clay, with a layer of the reddish brown clay spread over the surface. Care should be taken to preserve the measurements given and to make the outside area of the disk as smooth as the skin of a drum. The space surrounding the area of the disk may be of a white color. Any water used to smooth off the clay should be taken from a rock spring, and the clay should be rendered perfectly smooth and even.

Having thus prepared the *kasiṇa* device, the practitioner should clean the place of meditation, bathe himself or herself, and, on returning, sit on a seat well arranged, one span and four inches high and at a distance two and a half cubits from the frame.

Once comfortably seated in the proper posture, one should begin to meditate. First, one should consider the evils of sense desires, in some such way as "insatiate are sense desires, etc." (explained in detail in *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 85; 130; etc.). Then, one should take delight in the inward solitude of *nekkhamma*,[68] which is the means of escape from the ills of existence (*dukkha*). Next, one should infuse one's mind with joy by

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[66] Sanskrit *ṛṣi*, "seer, sage, poet".

[67] For Monks and Nuns, the place should not be too near a *vihāra*. The place for meditation should also be chosen at the extreme end of the grounds attached to the *vihāra* and should be shaded by a tree or some other object, or it should be a cavern or a temporary hut (*kuṭī*).

[68] *Nekkhamma* means "freedom from sensual lust", "renunciation".

reflecting upon the virtues of the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma*, and the *Sangha*. Then, turning to the practice that one is about to undertake, one should think that this is the path traversed by all the *Buddhas*, *Pacceka-Buddhas*, and their noble disciples, saying: "By this practice, I shall certainly partake of the supreme bliss of *nibbāna*."

Having prepared one's mind in this way, one should proceed to *kasiṇa bhāvanā*, taking its *nimitta* as the object, looking at it with an even gaze. The device must be seen, but not too clearly, for, otherwise, the acquired image (*uggaha nimitta*) would not arise. One should be neither too intent nor too careless. Just as a man, when looking at himself in a mirror, takes no notice of the form, color, or shape of the mirror itself, so, one should gaze at the device without taking note of its color or other characteristics. Leaving aside all thoughts of its color and of the material from which it is made, one should endeavor to hold in one's mind the concept of earth (*paṭhavī*), of which the *kasiṇa* is only the symbol. But, it is not enough merely to think of the earth of which the device is composed. One should also identify oneself with earth, remembering that the gross and solid particles of one's own body also consist of that element. For that purpose, one should select one of the Pāḷi names for "earth", such as *paṭhavī*, *mahī*, *medinī*, *bhūmi*, etc., whichever is most suitable for one's requirements. One should then silently repeat this word over and over again. But, inasmuch as the name most commonly used for "earth" is *paṭhavī*, one should favor this word, meditating upon it and repeating it at frequent intervals. Until the *uggaha nimitta* is obtained, one should concentrate upon the disk, sometimes with the eyes open, at other times with them shut, even though this exercise may have to be repeated a hundred or a thousand times. When the disk appears in the mind as clearly when the eyes are shut as when they are open, then, the sign called "*uggaha nimitta*" ("acquired image", or "mirror image") is fully developed.

Once the *uggaha nimitta* has been obtained, the practitioner should not remain seated in the same place, but, rising and entering one's own abode, one should resume one's meditation there, concentrating upon the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*). Should this concentration, which is still in an immature state, be lost through the intrusion of some other thought, one should return to the place where the device (*kasiṇa*) is located, obtain the *uggaha nimitta* afresh, and, returning again to one's abode and seating oneself comfortably, one should develop it with wholehearted attentiveness. According to the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*, the course of meditation up to this point is called "*pari-kamma*", "preliminary", and the concentration resulting from it is called "*parikamma-samādhi*", "preliminary concentration".

In the course of the development of this *samādhi*, induced by the *uggaha nimitta*, the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) are suppressed, the mental defilements (*kilesa*) are banished, and the mind is stabilized by access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). Then, the *paṭibhāga nimitta* ("counterpart image", or "after-image") arises, which is a hundred times, nay, a thousand times, more purified than the *uggaha nimitta*. In the *uggaha nimitta*, the faults (*dosa*) of the *kasiṇa* device are still observable, while in the *paṭibhāga nimitta*, they are not. The after-image (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) has the appearance of a clean mirror, or the orb of the moon, when it has just arisen from behind the clouds. But, it possesses neither color nor the appearance of solidity, for, otherwise, it would be

cognizable by the sense of sight, like a gross, material form, which would be more appropriate to the contemplation of the three characteristic marks. To a practitioner of *samādhi* meditation, this after-image is a sign produced by the mind. It is termed "counterpart" (*paṭibhāga*) in the sense that it is a mental representation of the primal quality of the object, in this case, the element of earth, and is empty of absolute reality.

From the time of its appearance, the hindrances remain suppressed, the mental defilements are banished, and the mind is fully concentrated in *upacāra samādhi* ("access concentration"). This level of concentration is called "*upacāra samādhi*", because it is near to attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*), or absorption concentration (*jhāna samādhi*), and is still on the borderline between *kāmāvacara* and *rūpāvacara*. Hence, it is also called "*kāmāvacara samādhi*" (see Chapter 4).

In the *kasiṇa* meditation, this *upacāra samādhi*, since it precedes that of *appanā samādhi*, is weak, for its concomitant factors are not stable. Just as a baby, when placed upon its feet for the first time, falls down repeatedly, even so, the mind that has reached the level of *upacāra samādhi* rests, for a moment, upon the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) and then lapses into *bhavanga* ("life-continuum"), the state of its primal being, or subconscious flow. But, once the mind has risen from *bhavanga* to the level of attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*), which is very strong, because it is associated with the *jhāna* factors, it may remain upon the object for a whole day or night, where it proceeds by way of a succession of wholesome states.[69]

If the practitioner, in developing the *paṭibhāga nimitta*, acquires the ability of attaining *appanā samādhi* in the same meditation session and in the same seat, well and good. If not, he should guard the *nimitta* with the greatest zeal. There are seven things that should be carefully followed by practitioners who wish to guard the *kasiṇa nimitta*:

1. Residence: Their abode must be free from whatever is incompatible with their contemplative life.

2. Village visited: The village that they visit when they go in search of alms-food must not be too far. It should be within seven hundred fifty bow-lengths[70] away and a place where they have no difficulty in obtaining alms.

3. Conversation: They must not indulge in any of the thirty-two kinds of worldly talk, inasmuch as this would lead to the disappearance of the *nimitta*. The thirty-two kinds of worldly talk are as follows (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 7; etc.):

   "Whereas some ascetics and Brahmins remain addicted to such unedifying conversation as about kings, robbers, ministers, armies, dangers, wars, food, drink, clothes, beds, garlands, perfumes, relatives, carriages, villages, towns and cities, countries, women, heroes, street- and well-gossip, talk of the

[69] Hence, *jhāna* in Buddhism does not, by any means, imply a decreased vitality as in a trance.
[70] That is, a *kosa* and a half. One *kosa* is equal to five hundred bow lengths.

> *departed, desultory chat, speculations about land and sea, talk about being and non-being, the Ascetic Gotama refrains from such conversation."*

In essence, this means refraining from false speech, vulgar speech, sarcasm, gossip, and idle chatter.

4. Company: They must not converse with those who indulge in worldly talk, even though the conversation may be about things that are allowed as topics of discussion. They may only converse with those who are themselves seeking to develop *samādhi*.

5. Food: Those who are students of *samādhi* must not have those kinds of food that are likely to cause indigestion, agitation, stimulation, cramps, diarrhea, flatulence, or the like. They must only take food that is suitable for right composure of body and mind.

6. The environment: For some, a cooler environment is more suitable, while, for others, a warmer environment is more suitable. In any case, the environment most agreeable to the individual must be chosen.

7. Postures: The posture, or position of the body, must be chosen with a view to comfort, whether it be walking to and fro, lying down,[71] standing, or sitting. In order to discover the most suitable and agreeable posture, the practitioner should try each of the postures of a period of three days.

If meditators develop the counterpart sign (*paṭṭibhāga nimitta*) in accordance with these considerations, in a short time, they should attain to *appanā samādhi*, whereby the consciousness is transmuted to the *jhāna* state. If, in spite of their practice, they have not succeeded, they should follow the course of training for the attainment of *appanā samādhi*, which consists of ten factors, all of which should be practiced in unison. These ten factors are:

1. Cleanliness;
2. Regulation of the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and insight;
3. Skill in guarding the sign which has been obtained through the preliminary practice of meditation;
4. Support of the mind when it is slackened;
5. Composure of the mind when it is distracted by an excess of energy from some other cause;

[71] Lying down should only be used as a meditation position if one is disabled or if one is sick. Unless one is hospitalized or bed-ridden for some reason, one should not meditate in one's bed or any other place where one normally rests or goes to sleep.

6. Gladdening of the mind when it has become dispirited through lack of comprehension and failure to attain the goal for which one is striving. In this case, one should gladden one's mind by reflecting upon the virtues of the *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha*, as explained in the *Buddhānussati*, *Dhammānussati*, and *Sanghānussati* (see Chapter 15);
7. The balancing of the mind when it has become unbalanced;
8. Avoidance of people who are not accustomed to *samādhi* and who are of a frivolous nature;
9. Association with those who have already attained *samādhi* or who are on the path;
10. Whole-hearted inclination towards *samādhi* with a firm resolution to attain it.

Thus should this tenfold skillfulness in *appanā samādhi* be accomplished.

Even this training may be of no avail to some individuals in the beginning. But, such a person should not, therefore, cease to strive, for the winning of spiritual happiness is difficult for worldlings (*puthujjana*) who have been lost in the never-ending cycle of *saṁsāra* for countless existences. One should, therefore, continue the practice strenuously, paying careful attention to this mental condition, strengthening the mind when it is slack and restraining it when it is too vigorous. While thus practicing the same *nimitta*, repeating the word "*paṭhavī*, *paṭhavī* …", the mind, gradually becoming apt and fit, will, in due course, attain to the *appanā samādhi*.

In this manner, one attains the first fine material, or form, absorption (*rūpajjhāna*) of the *paṭhavī-kasiṇa*, becoming such as is described in the scriptures (*Dhammasangaṇī* 160, p. 31): "Free from sense desires, free from evil thoughts, with initial and sustained application, with rapture (*pīti*) and happiness (*sukha*), born of inward solitude, one abides having attained the first *jhāna* of *paṭhavī-kasiṇa*."

Buddhaghosa Thera gives a long commentary on this *Dhammasangaṇī* formula. The practitioner who develops, in due course, the same *nimitta* of the *paṭhavī-kasiṇa* can attain even the fifth *jhāna* by the method explained in Chapter 5.

Āpo-kasiṇa

The practitioner who wishes to meditate upon the water-*kasiṇa* (*āpo-kasiṇa*) should obtain the *nimitta* in water, either prepared or unprepared. Here again, those who have had previous experience will find that the *nimitta* appears in natural water, such as a pond, a lake, a river,[72] or the ocean. The inexperienced practitioner should avoid the "faults of the *kasiṇa*", such as the four colors, and should take a vessel filled with rain-water, freshly fallen from the sky and collected by means of a clean cloth before it reaches the ground, or, failing this, other such pure water. Placing it in a secluded place, as in the case of the earth-*kasiṇa* (*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*), one should seat oneself comfortably and begin one's meditation. One should pay no attention to its color or its characteristics,

[72] In the *Kuddāla Jātaka*, we are told that the *Bodhisatta* obtained the *nimitta* while looking at a river, and, developing it, he attained *jhāna*, and, sitting in the sky, taught the *Dhamma* to the King of Benares.

but mindfully only to the element which it symbolizes, and should mentally repeat one of the following Pāḷi words for "water": "*ambu*", "*udaka*", "*vārī*", "*salila*", or "*āpo*". As one practices, in due course, the two *nimittas* will appear. If there is a movement in the water, or if bubbles are present, the same features may appear in the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*). The counterpart sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*), however, will be motionless and like a jeweled fan or a mirror placed in the sky. When it is fully developed, one will be able to attain even the fourth and fifth *jhānas*.

Tejo-kasiṇa

Those who wish to practice meditation upon the fire-*kasiṇa* (*tejo-kasiṇa*), or fire device, should obtain the sign in fire, either prepared or unprepared. To those who have previous experience, the *nimitta* may appear as they gaze at the flame of a lamp or cooking-stove, or at a forest fire, as it did to the Elder Cittagutta (in Śri Lanka). The Elder entered the assembly hall on the day appointed for discourses on the *Dhamma*, and, as he looked at the flame of a lamp, the *kasiṇa-nimitta* appeared to him. Moreover, we read in the *Therīgāthā* Commentary that Sister Uppalavaṇṇā lit the lamp in the Uposatha meeting hall and took the flame as the *nimitta*. Contemplating it, she thus attained *jhāna* by means of the fire-*kasiṇa* (*tejo-kasiṇa*). Making this the basis (*pādaka*), in due course, she attained Arahatship (*Therīgāthā* A, 190).

But those who do not possess the advantage of prior experience should proceed to make the device in the following manner: Taking a mat or a piece of cloth, one should make a hole in it one span and four inches wide, about twelve inches in all. Setting it up before the fire like a screen, one should sit down in the manner described above and gaze at the fire through that hole. Paying no heed to the grass or the firewood below, or the clouds of smoke above, one should take the sign in the middle of the volume of flame. Without considering its color, whatever it may be, and paying no attention to its characteristics of heat, one should concentrate upon it. When the mental device and the physical basis — the flame — are found to be of the same color, one should keep one's mind upon fire as a concept and meditate, repeating the word "*tejo*", "*tejo*", or any of the other Pāḷi names for "fire", such as "*pāvaka*", "*kaṇhavattanī*", "*jātaveda*", or "*hutāsana*". As one thus meditates, in due course, the two signs will appear. Of these, the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) appears to one as a series of flashes which burst momentarily into flame and are then extinguished.

When a meditator obtains the *nimitta* in an ordinary fire, that is, in one not specifically prepared for this purpose, the defects of the device may also appear, whether it be a piece of burnt wood, a burning coal, ash, or smoke. Once it has developed into the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*), or after-image, it appears like a piece of red blanket or a golden fan or pillar placed in the sky. With the appearance of the *paṭibhāga nimitta*, the disciple attains to access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) and may afterwards attain the fourth and fifth absorptions (*jhāna*).

Vāyo-kasiṇa

Those who wish to practice the air-*kasiṇa* (*vāyo-kasiṇa*) should take the sign in air, either by sight or by touch. As stated in the Commentaries: "He who studies the *vāyo-kasiṇa* takes the sign in air and notes the shaking and swaying top of sugarcane, or a bamboo top, a treetop, or hair-tuft, or he notes the air touching his body." One should, therefore, take the air device, gazing at sugarcane or any other plant with thick foliage, which is standing level with one's head and shaking with the movement of the air. One should note particularly the point at which the wind strikes and take this for the device. When one takes the sign in the air touching one's body, entering through a window or a hole in the wall, one should note the part of the body that is touched by the wind. Thus, mindful of the touch of the wind, one should meditate, repeating the word "*vāyo*", "*vāyo*", or some other Pāḷi word for "air", such as "*vāta*", "*māluta*", "*pavana*", or "*anila*". In this meditation, the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) appears shaky, something like a ring of steam rising from rice gruel just taken out of the oven. But the after-image (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) is steady and well defined. The same may be said with regard to the attainment of absorption (*jhāna*) as with the other *kasiṇas*.

Nīla-kasiṇa

Of the four color *kasiṇas*, those who wish to practice the blue-*kasiṇa* (*nīla-kasiṇa*) should obtain the *nimitta* in a blue flower or cloth, or in an element of that color, such as a blue stone or metal. To those who possess the advantage of previous experience, the sign appears as they behold such a flower or bed of flowers, or some blue object such as a piece of cloth or a gem. The beginner, however, should take a bunch of flowers of the blue lotus or other such plant and arrange them in a basket or upon a round tray, so that they assume the shape of a round, dense, blue object, care being taken that no pollen or stalks may be seen. Failing this, one should make a device of a blue metal, a blue leaf, or blue collyrium. Or else, it may be a disk, painted blue, of a diameter of one span and four inches, twelve inches in all, and with a border of some other color. It may be movable and fitted with a frame, like the *paṭhavī-kasiṇa*, or fixed to a wall. One should then contemplate it, repeating mentally, "*nīla*", "*nīla*". In this case also, the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) retains the "faults" of the original symbol, as, for example, the veins in the petals, slight variations of shade, or the framework. But the after-image (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) appears free from all these, pure and clear like a fan made from a blue jewel. In regard to the attainment of the absorptions (*jhāna*), the same may be said of this as of other *kasiṇas*.

Pīta-kasiṇa

In this *kasiṇa*, the sign will be taken by an experienced meditator in a yellow flower or cloth, or an element of that color. The beginner, however, should make the device in the manner described above, using a yellow flower like the bauhinia, or a

yellow cloth, metal, or jewel. The meditation proceeds with the repetition of the word "*pīta*", "*pīta*", or "*pītaka*", "*pītaka*". The rest is as described above.

Lohita-kasiṇa

Here, too, experienced meditators will obtain the *nimitta* as they gaze at a red flower or some other red object. Beginners, however, should take the mental image from a red flower, chosen for the purpose, a piece of red cloth, or an element of that color. As one meditates, one repeats the word "*lohita*", "*lohita*", or "*lohitaka*", "*lohitaka*". In due course, the two signs will appear, and further practice is the same as described above for the other *kasiṇas*.

Odāta-kasiṇa

As for the white-*kasiṇa* (*odāta-kasiṇa*), experienced meditators are able to take the *nimitta* as they see a white flower, such as jasmine, or a bed of flowers, or a white cloth. It may also arise for experienced meditators in a disk of lead or silver, or the moon. Others should prepare the device with white flowers, such as the white lotus or water-lily, or, failing this, a white cloth or other substance. Then, they should proceed with the meditation, repeating the word "*odāta*", "*odāta*". The rest is as above.

Āloka-kasiṇa

Those who wish to practice the light-*kasiṇa* (*āloka-kasiṇa*), should take the sign in light entering through a crack in a wall, a keyhole, or an open window. For those who are experienced meditators of this *kasiṇa*, the sign will appear as they see a circular patch of sunlight or moonlight on the wall or ground, or entering through a hole in the wall or roof. It may also appear as they gaze at the circular patches made on the ground by the light streaming through the dense foliage of a tree. Beginners should also take the *nimitta* by looking at such a patch of light and meditating on it, saying "*āloka*", "*āloka*", or "*obhāsa*", "*obhāsa*". Those who are unable to do this should light a lamp or a candle and, placing it in an earthen pot with a hole in the side and the top covered, set it down with the hole facing a wall. The lamp-light issuing from the hole will, thus, cast a spot of light upon the wall. This will have the advantage of lasting longer than the others. They should then contemplate it by repeating "*āloka*", "*āloka*". Here, the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) will take the shape of a disk made on the wall or the ground, but the after-image (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) will appear as a mass of bright illumination. The further development is as above.

Paricchinna-ākāsa-kasiṇa

In the case of the space-*kasiṇa* (*paricchinna-ākāsa-kasiṇa*), the Commentary states: "He who studies the *ākāsa-kasiṇa*, takes the sign in space [limited by] a crack in a

wall, a keyhole, or a window space." Failing to take the sign in one of these, the disciple should make a hole one span and four inches wide, about twelve inches in all, either in a well-covered tent or pavilion, a mat, or a similar object. Repeating the word "*ākāsa*" as one meditates, one will find that the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) appears in the shape of the crack, or keyhole, or whatever. However, it cannot be extended. The after-image (*paṭibhāga nimitta*), however, appears without limits (such as the edges of the crack in the wall or keyhole), as large as the expanse of the sky. The rest corresponds to what was said above for the earth-*kasiṇa* (*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*).

The Instructions Given in The *Yogāvacara's Manual*

Thus, we see that the *Buddha* has explained the use of the ten *kasiṇas* as a means of attaining absorption (*jhāna*), whether in the fourfold or the fivefold system. To this day, the Buddhists of the Theravādin School practice them according to the methods taught by the *Buddha*, as explained above. The supplementary instructions given here are largely based upon the Śri Lankan tradition and are found in the *Yogāvacara's Manual* (pp. 46—52), where they are placed just after the meditation on mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*).

There, it is stated that the practitioner, after having repeated the invocation — the adoration of and the taking of refuge in the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma*, and the *Sangha*[73] —

[73] Here, practitioners should repeat:

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhasa.
Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhasa.
Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhasa.

Following that, they should take refuge, as follows:

Buddhaṁ saranaṁ gacchāmi.
Dhammaṁ saranaṁ gacchāmi.
Sanghaṁ saranaṁ gacchāmi.

Dutiyampi Buddhaṁ saranaṁ gacchāmi.
Dutiyampi Dhammaṁ saranaṁ gacchāmi.
Dutiyampi Sanghaṁ saranaṁ gacchāmi.

Tatiyampi Buddhaṁ saranaṁ gacchāmi.
Tatiyampi Dhammaṁ saranaṁ gacchāmi.
Tatiyampi Sanghaṁ saranaṁ gacchāmi.

Next, they should recite the formulas of the three recollections (*anussati*): recollection of the *Buddha* (*Buddhānussati*), of the *Dhamma* (*Dhammānussati*), and of the *Sangha* (*Sanghānussati*). Then, they should recite the text of the Discourse on Loving-Kindness (Mettā Sutta) (*Sutta Nipāta* 1:8). Finally, they should recite the stanzas of the Great Discourse on Good Fortune (Mahā Mangala Sutta) (*Sutta Nipāta* 2:4). This invocation must be repeated with every form of meditation.

and, having fulfilled other necessary observances, should aspire first for the meditation on the earth-*kasiṇa* (*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*), as follows:

> *In reverence for the teachings of the Fully-Enlightened One, the Buddha Gotama, I strive to fulfill His teachings.*
>
> *I ask for uggaha nimitta, paṭibhāga nimitta, the method of upacāra [concentration], the method of appanā concentration, the ten kasiṇas, of the paṭhavī-kasiṇa, in [my] innermost being.*
>
> *Nine are the supramundane states [the four paths, the four fruitions, and nibbāna]… I aspire for them [to be revealed to me] one by one, from stage to stage.*
>
> *May that state be manifest in me in the five aggregates (khandha), in the doors (dvāra) of the eye, the mind, and the sense of touch. When I sit down to practice meditation, at that very moment, by the aid of this true utterance, may it shine forth, and may the success be mine.*
>
> *May the Buddha's virtue be my refuge; may the virtue of the Dhamma and the Sangha be my refuge; may my teacher's virtue be my refuge; may a well practiced kammaṭṭhāna be my refuge; may the virtue of all the kammaṭṭhānas be my refuge. Now I dedicate my life to the Triple Gem, to the Fivefold Gem. May I reach nibbāna; may this be an aid to [the attainment of] nibbāna.*

One then sits down cross-legged, with body erect, and establishes mindfulness within. Next, one proceeds with meditation upon the mental image of the earth-*kasiṇa* (*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*), repeating the words "*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*", "*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*", while realizing "*sabbaṁ paṭhavī*", "all is earth".

At this point, the meditator is instructed to consider the twenty solid constituent parts of the body that belong to the element of earth and the twelve that belong to the element of water, these being the thirty-two kinds of bodily blemishes that, it should be borne in mind, are transient, void of individuality, and doomed to dissolve and pass away at death. Meditating thus, the two signs mentioned above (*uggaha nimitta* and *paṭibhāga nimitta*) will appear in succession. The mental image (*uggaha nimitta*) of these will not be so vivid in that it possesses the quality, or shape, of the *kasiṇa*. But the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*), or after-image, will arise, breaking up the stream of the life-continuum (*bhavanga-sota*), piercing, as it were, the mental image, like a crystal mirror or jewel taken out from its covering, or the moon breaking through the clouds. Here, the concept of the element of earth (*paṭhavī-dhātu*, or *paṭhavī-mahābhūta*) appears, wholly occupying the mind.

Thereafter, the meditator pursues the practice in order to reach the second *jhāna*, forming the aspiration: "May I attain the second *jhāna* in the innermost reaches of my being … in the earth-*kasiṇa*, by proceeding with meditation in due order."

As a result, the element of heat (*tejo-dhātu*, or *tejo-mahābhūta*) appears, and, observing its thought moments, one should place it about an inch above the (imaginary spot) of the first absorption (*jhāna*) in due order.[74]

In the next stage, the same element is placed in reverse order, where, previously, it was placed in due order. The rest is as described above.

In the meditation for the third *jhāna*, the element of cohesion (*āpo-dhātu*, or *āpo-mahābhūta*) appears. Observing it well, one should place it in due order about an inch above the spot of the second *jhāna*.

After the attainment of the third *jhāna*, one should place it in reverse order, where, previously, it was placed in due order.

One continues to meditate, aspiring for the fourth *jhāna*. The element of mobility (*vāyo-dhātu*, or *vāyo-mahābhūta*) appears. Observing it well, one places it with the three thought moments in due order an inch above the spot of the third *jhāna*.

After the attainment of the fourth *jhāna*, one should place it in reverse order, where, previously, it was placed in due order.

The aspiration for the fifth *jhāna* follows. The element of space (*ākāsa*) appears therein. Carefully observing the three thought moments, one places them about an inch above the spot of the fourth *jhāna* and between it and the heart.

After the attainment of the fifth *jhāna*, one should place it in reverse order, where, previously, it was placed in due order.

Following that, the meditator is instructed to pursue all the methods, beginning with the invocation and preliminaries, which are necessary at each stage of practice, completing them both in due order and in reverse order.

The meditation of each absorption (*jhāna*) contains four phases: (1) from the beginning up to the appearance of the signs (*nimitta*); (2) from the appearance of the signs up to the appearance of the corresponding *jhāna* factor (*jhānanga*) of each *jhāna* and the placing of the three thought moments in proper order in the places described; (3) observation of *Dhamma-saññā* ("righteous thought") and aspiration for *jhāna*, followed by withdrawal of the thought moments from the tip of the nose and arrangement of them in the proper places; and (4) the attainment of *jhāna* and the arrangement of the thought moments in reverse order in the proper places.

After the attainment of all the five absorptions, meditators should train themselves in the practice of each, both in direct and reverse orders, following either method, placing each above or around the navel, as they prefer.

At the end of the section dealing with the earth-*kasiṇa*, the *Yogāvacara's Manual* states that it should be noted that, in this way, the method of the fourfold practice of the earth-*kasiṇa* is explained. Thus, this scheme should be developed by meditators who follow either method, placing each absorption, beginning with the first, above and around the navel, as they prefer.

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[74] This and the following seem to be rather esoteric and not capable of being understood clearly without an experienced teacher.

The same method is followed in the practice of the other *kasiṇas*. Each one should be practiced in the four ways, as described above for the earth-*kasiṇa*.

Special Advantages

After dealing with the *kasiṇa* meditation, the *Visuddhimagga* gives an exposition concerning the special advantages that a meditator may expect to receive.

By practicing the earth-*kasiṇa* (*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*), meditators will acquire: (1) the power of multiplying themselves, being one to appear as many; (2) the ability to create the solidity of earth in the air or on the water, and to walk, stand, sit, or lie upon it; and (3) mastery over material objects (*abhibhāyatana*), both the limited and the unlimited.

By practicing the water-*kasiṇa* (*āpo-kasiṇa*), meditators become able: (1) to dive into the earth as though into water; (2) to create rain, rivers, and seas; (3) to shake the earth and rocks, or the dwellings thereon, separately; and (4) to cause water to issue from all parts of the body as they choose.

By practicing the fire-*kasiṇa* (*tejo-kasiṇa*), meditators: (1) acquire the power to cause smoke to issue from all parts of the body, and fire to come down from the sky like a shower; (2) by means of the heat that issues from their body, they can overpower that which comes from another person; (3) can cause anything to burn at will; (4) can create a light to see forms as though with divine eyes (*dibba-cakkhu*); and (5), when at the point of death, can cremate their own body spontaneously by means of the fire element.

By practicing the air-*kasiṇa* (*vāyo-kasiṇa*), meditators: (1) acquire the power to move themselves as swiftly as the wind; (2) can cause the wind to blow and the rain to fall wherever they wish; and (3) can cause any substance to remove itself from one place to another ("telekinesis").

By practicing the blue-*kasiṇa* (*nīla-kasiṇa*), meditators: (1) can radiate the world, within the limit of their will, with the blue color; (2) can create blue forms; (3) can create darkness; (4) can acquire mastery over blue-colored objects, whether of a clean or an unclean appearance; and (5) can attain aesthetic release[75] (*subha-vimokkha*).

By practicing the yellow-*kasiṇa* (*pīta-kasiṇa*), meditators: (1) can radiate yellow color from their body and diffuse it over the world; (2) can create yellow forms; (3) can change any substance whatever into gold; (4) can acquire mastery over yellow-colored objects by the above method; and (5) can attain aesthetic release.

By practicing the red-*kasiṇa* (*lohita-kasiṇa*), meditators: (1) can display red color in the same way as already described; (2) can attain mastery over red-colored objects; and (3) can attain aesthetic release.

By practicing the white-*kasiṇa* (*odāta-kasiṇa*), meditators: (1) can create white forms; (2) can overcome sleepiness and sloth and torpor; (3) can dispel darkness; (4) can

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[75] This can also be attained by other color *kasiṇas*. Since color *kasiṇas* are bright, meditators see all forms (*rūpa*), good or bad, as "*subha*", "good", with the mind free from repulsion.

produce light to see forms as though with divine eyes; (5) can attain mastery over white-colored objects; and (6) can attain aesthetic release.

By practicing the light-*kasiṇa* (*āloka-kasiṇa*), meditators: (1) can create illumination; (2) can make illuminated forms materialize; (3) can overcome sloth and torpor; and (4) can produce light to see forms as though with divine eyes.

By practicing the space-*kasiṇa* (*ākāsa-kasiṇa*), meditators: (1) can discover objects that are concealed; (2) can cause things to appear that are lost or hidden; (3) can see into the middle of rocks and into the earth; (4) can penetrate into them and create space within them; and (5) can pass through walls and other solid masses.

The visualization of all of them is divided (as we read in *Majjhima Nikāya* II, 14) according to whether it is above, below, around, in unity or non-dual, or immeasurable. Thus, one may visualize the earth-*kasiṇa* (*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*) and expand it upward, up to the sky; another downward; another on all sides; and so on. One may spread out the *kasiṇa* for various reasons, such as, for example, one who desires to see forms with divine eyes diffuses the light. Visualization that is "in unity" or "non-dual" is intended to show that one *kasiṇa* does not mix with another (that is, in the case of visualization, although they are inseparable [*avinibbhoga*] in their elementary nature) or does not attain the state of another. For, just as a man who has entered the water finds water all about him, and not any other element, even so, the earth-*kasiṇa* is simply earth-*kasiṇa* — it does not mix with any other *kasiṇa*. The same is true of all other *kasiṇas*. In the mental diffusion of the *kasiṇa*, there is no measure or limit, for those who diffuse it know no bounds, but, instead, diffuse it to the entire universe. This universality accords with the original meaning ascribed to the word "*kasiṇa*" (Sanskrit *kṛtsna*), "all, whole, entire".

Persons Who are not Suitable for Kasiṇa Meditation

In the *Anguttara Nikāya* (III, 436), the following statement is found:

> *"Those individuals who are followed by evil kamma, obstructive evil deeds,*[76] *or by evil influences of [previous] kamma, and those who are skeptical, lacking in will [to endeavor], and dull [in nature], are incapable of entering into assurance, the success in the virtuous state …"*

Such persons will not succeed in practicing any of the ten *kasiṇas*. Moreover, those who are hermaphrodites or eunuchs cannot attain success in the practice of *kasiṇa* meditation. This is true not only of the *kasiṇa* practice, but also of other subjects of meditation — none of the persons mentioned above will succeed in attaining the full results, unless their condition is changed in the present life or in another. Only those who possess the good qualities of faith, wisdom, and determination can practice this

[76] This refers to the five grave evil deeds: (1) killing one's mother; (2) killing one's father; (3) killing an *Arahat*; (4) shedding the blood from the *Buddha's* body; and (5) causing a schism in the *Sangha*.

meditation with success. The *jhānas* induced by means of the *kasiṇas* lead to the path of insight, thus enabling aspirants to accomplish the fulfillment of perfection of knowledge through which they will attain to the bliss of *nibbāna*. ■

14

Asubha Bhāvanā

Introduction

The three predominant characteristics of living beings, which bind them to the wheel of *saṁsāra*, the repetition of birth and death, are: (1) sense desire (*kāmacchanda*); (2) desire for existence (*bhava-taṇhā*); and (3) ignorance (*avijjā*). Beings that dwell in the sense world are dominated by desire (craving), which operates through the five senses and weaves the whole fabric of physical existence. The mind that is tainted with sense desire develops a lascivious disposition that leads the individual to multiply the various activities that gratify the senses. The *kamma* that is produced by these activities keeps beings in a low state of physical existence in which they experience an endless repetition of joy and sorrow. Deluded by the seeming reality and worthiness of the body, they fail to realize the way that leads to the cessation of misery. The physical body is, for many reasons, not only a source of perpetual nuisance, but also a fetter that prevents escape from suffering. This fetter must, therefore, be broken if the happiness of eternal peace is to be won, and this is only possible for those who have realized the transitory nature of the body. Full knowledge of this subject, however, can be gained by meditating upon the body, and there are, therefore, several forms of such meditation that are found frequently in the scriptures. One of these is *asubha bhāvanā*, "meditation on impurities", also called "cemetery contemplations" (*sīvathikā*), which has been developed in ten forms in order to counteract ten different kinds of lustful inclinations.

The word "*asubha*", which is usually translated as "foulness", "loathsomeness", or "impurity", is here applied to the ten stages of the decay of a corpse, the sign (*nimitta*), or mental object, derived from them, and the absorption (*jhāna*) induced by that sign. The proper way of thinking, or the development of the idea of the impure nature of the body, is called "*asubha bhāvanā*". This meditation has been recommended as an important practice in passages such as the following (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 424):

> *"Asubhaṁ, Rāhula, bhāvanaṁ bhāvehi: asubhaṁ hi te Rāhula bhāvanaṁ bhāvayato yo rāgo pahiyissati" — "Cultivate, Rāhula, meditation on impurities (asubha bhāvanā), for, when you cultivate it, the passion of lust (rāga) will cease."*

"Asubhā bhāvetabbā rāgassa pahānāya" — "Meditation on impurities should be practiced for the destruction of lust." (*Anguttara Nikāya* IV, 357.)

According to the testimony of the scriptures, the practice of the meditation on impurities (*asubha bhāvanā*) seems to be exclusively Buddhist, and, inasmuch as it occurs in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* (volume III) in connection with the third *pārājika* rule, it must have been introduced during a very early phase of the *Buddha's* teaching. The loathsomeness of the body was very widely recognized among the sages of Ancient India, but, as just noted, this method of meditating upon a dead body has not yet been found in any Indian system other than Buddhism. As already noted, the practice is recommended for those who are of a lustful disposition. The practice of *asubha bhāvanā* contains ten separate subjects (*kammaṭṭhāna*), corresponding to the ten states of a corpse. They are given in the *Dhammasangaṇī* in connection with the first *jhāna* formula and are classified as follows:

1. *Uddumātaka*, a "swollen corpse";
2. *Vinīlaka*, a "discolored corpse";
3. *Vipubbaka*, a "festering corpse";
4. *Vicchiddaka*, a "fissured corpse";
5. *Vikkhāyitaka*, a "mangled corpse";
6. *Vikkhittaka*, a "dismembered corpse";
7. *Hatavikkhittaka*, a "cut and dismembered corpse";
8. *Lohitaka*, a "bloody corpse";
9. *Pulavaka*, a "corpse infested with worms";
10. *Aṭṭhika*, a "skeleton".

According to the Commentary (*Atthasālinī*, pp. 197—199; also *Visuddhimagga* II, 194), the classification of the *asubha* consists of ten parts, corresponding to the natural stages of decay of a corpse, and they are prescribed for ten different kinds of lustful dispositions:

1. *Uddumātaka*, a "swollen corpse", exemplifying the decay of the form of the body, is suitable for those who lust after the beauty of the physical form.
2. *Vinīlaka*, a "discolored corpse", clearly showing the decayed beauty of the skin, is suitable for those who lust after the beauty of the skin and complexion.
3. *Vipubbaka*, a "festering corpse", with a stench issuing from the sores on the body, is suitable for those who lust after a sweet-smelling body, produced by such artificial means as flowers, perfumes, and unguents.
4. *Vicchiddaka*, a "fissured corpse", showing the existence of various cavities within the body, is suitable for those who lust after the apparent firmness and solidity of the body.

5. *Vikkhāyitaka*, a "mangled corpse", portraying the destruction of the perfection of the fullness of the flesh, is suitable for those who lust after the fullness of the flesh in such parts of the body as the breasts.
6. *Vikkhittaka*, a "dismembered corpse", with the limbs scattered about, is suitable for those who lust after the graceful movements of the body.
7. *Hatavikkhittaka*, a "cut and dismembered corpse", with dislocated joints, is suitable for those who lust after the perfection of the joints of the body.
8. *Lohitaka*, a "bloody corpse", showing the repulsiveness of a body besmeared with blood, is suitable for those who lust after beauty produced by jewelry, makeup, and other adornments.
9. *Pulavaka*, a "corpse infested with worms", illustrating the state of the body swarming with various kinds of worms, is suitable for those who lust after the idea that the body is "I", "me", or "mine".
10. *Aṭṭhika*, a "skeleton", showing the gruesomeness of the bones of the body, is suitable for those who lust after the perfection of teeth and nails.

Thus, these ten types of corpse have been recommended as ten separate subjects of *asubha* meditation, designed to counteract different kinds of lustful inclinations.

A similar form of *asubha* meditation is to be found in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (The Foundations of Mindfulness) (*Dīgha Nikāya* II, 295; *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 58), where nine stages of the decay of a dead body are described as "*sīvathikāya chaḍḍhitaṁ*", "thrown into a *sīvathikā*".[77] This meditation is given there as a part of *kāyānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*, "mindfulness of the body". It comprises both *samatha* and *vipassanā*, and, in particular, it forms the path of deliverance for those of a lustful disposition (*rāga carita*).

The ten *asubha* meditations, which are given in the *Dhammasangaṇī* as described above, are included in the *Visuddhimagga* as subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) capable of producing attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*). However, they only induce the first absorption (*jhāna*), for the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) derived from them is not strong enough to be developed into the higher *jhāna* stages. In the words of the Commentary (*Atthasālinī*, p. 199): "just as on a river whose waters flow with a swift current, a boat can only be steadied by the power of the rudder, so, from the weakness of the mental object in this meditation, which is due to the repulsive state of the object itself, the mind can only be freed from its abstraction and concentrated by the power of initial application (*vitakka*)." Thus, owing to the weakness of the mental object, the ten *asubha* meditations lead only to the first *jhāna* with *vitakka* and not to the higher *jhānas*.

Although these subjects are so foul and repulsive, there arises joy in those who meditate upon them, seeking to remove the torments of lust and other hindrances, and to be rid of birth, decay, and death. They are like sick people pleased at the alleviation of their sickness and misery through such treatments as emetics and purgatives. Thus,

[77] A place where dead bodies were thrown to rot instead of being buried or cremated. *Sīvathikā* is usually translated as "cemetery", or "charnel ground".

though there is much abomination and disgust in these foul objects, yet, because they lead to the first *jhāna*, which is the entrance to the path of *vipassanā* knowledge, they have been adopted as a physical means of securing mental concentration.

The Method of Meditation

1. *Uddumātaka*, a "swollen corpse": Herein, as stated in the *Visuddhimagga*, those who wish to attain *jhāna* based upon the sign of a swollen corpse should approach such a teacher as is described in connection with the *kasiṇa* meditation (Chapter 13) and learn the method of meditation from him or her. In instructing their pupils, teachers should explain the first duties and rules concerning the manner of going to view a corpse, of noting the surroundings and signs of the place where the corpse is found, of grasping the mental image in eleven ways, and of considering the path taken in going and returning, and, finally, they should explain the method of meditation leading to *jhāna*. The pupils, having learned all these instructions carefully, should live in a suitable monastery or place of residence before seeking the sign of a swollen corpse.

2. On going to see a corpse: While living in a suitable monastery or place of residence, one may hear that there is a corpse lying in such and such a cemetery or charnel ground. But, one should not go there at once, because the dead body may be beset by wild beasts, and also by evil spirits. This being so, there may even be mortal danger for one. Again, the way may take one past a village gate, or a bathing place, or through a plowed field, where some cause of distraction, such as a person of the opposite sex, may cross one's path. Moreover, the corpse itself may not be suitable, for the corpse of a woman is not suitable for a man, and the corpse of a man is not suitable for a woman, since a body not long dead may appear pleasing to some and prove an impediment to the meditation. But, those who are strong minded and self-possessed need take no such precautions. Normally, however, Monks and Nuns should inform an Elder of the *Sangha*, or any other accomplished Monk or Nun in the monastery before going, for they will protect one should there be danger.

   After due notice, one should go alone, with joy and gladness due to one's desire to see this sign of the foul thing, which is a rare subject of meditation. Mindful and self-possessed, with senses at rest, one proceeds, reflecting on the original subject of meditation (*mūla-kammaṭṭhāna*), such as *ānāpānasati*, that one has been practicing. Along the way, one should also take note of the path from the monastery or place of residence to the place where the corpse lies, marking its directions, turnings, and other features encountered, such as rocks, hills, trees, or bushes. Noting the path thus, for it will be of advantage later in the course of meditation, one should proceed to the place where the corpse is lying. However, in approaching the corpse, one should not walk against the wind, for, if one does so, the stench of it may disturb one's mind and even produce nausea. One should, therefore, take care to approach

from the opposite direction. If there is no path for one to approach with the wind, one should take the precaution of covering one's nose when nearing the corpse.

3. On noting the signs of the place: Having thus gone to the place where the corpse lies, one should not look at it at once, but should determine the place from which one can take the best view of the object. One should stand neither facing nor with one's back to the wind, but turned a little to the side, not too much behind the wind, and keeping at a comfortable distance from the middle part of the corpse. Then, one should first note the surroundings and signs of the place. If there is a rock within the range of one's sight as one looks towards the object, one should note its features, whether it is high or low, small or large, long or round, black or white. Then, one should carefully note: "In this place, this is the rock, that is the corpse; that is the corpse, this is the rock." If there is an anthill, a tree, a bush, or a vine, one should note it in all respects as described above. The purpose of noting the surrounding signs is to avoid the illusory visions that may arise during the course of meditation.

4. On taking the mental image: Having thus determined the external surroundings, one should grasp the mental image (*uggaha nimitta*), considering the nature of the object, that is, its own particular state, bearing resemblance to a tumor. One should grasp it in six ways: "from the point of view of color, feature, shape, direction, locality, and limitation."

    a. As to color, one should take note whether the corpse is that of a dark-skinned or a light-skinned person;
    b. From the point of view of feature, one should not consider it male or female, but should determine whether it is the body of a young, middle-aged, or old person;
    c. As to the shape, one should determine the shape of each part of the body — the head, neck, hands, etc.;
    d. As to direction, one should determine thus: "Concerning this body, there are two directions — the lower direction, from the navel downwards, and the upper direction, from the navel upwards"; or: "I stand in this direction, and the body lies in that direction."
    e. Noting the locality, one should determine: "In this spot are the hands, here are the feet, there is the head, there is the middle part"; or else, one should note: "Here in this spot, I stand; in that spot lies the dead body."
    f. As regards the limit, one should determine: "This body is limited below by the sole of the foot, above by the hair of the head, across by the skin, and, within these limits, it contains the thirty-two putrid body parts"; or one should determine: "This is the limit of the hands; that, the limit of the feet; that, the limit of the head; that, the limit of the midsection."

Whatever part of the body one has in mind, one should think: "This is nothing but the image of the swollen thing." One should keep it before oneself as an abstract

image derived from the foul object, and, on this abstract image, one continues one's meditation.

But, it is not proper for a man to meditate on a female corpse, nor for a woman on a male corpse, for even a dead body of the opposite sex may cause a stirring of the passions, and the sign may not appear foul.[78] Meditators should, therefore, take the sign of the swollen thing in one of these six ways from a dead body of their own sex.

To one who has practiced this subject of meditation in the presence of a previous *Buddha* and has observed the ascetic practices, the after-image (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) appears in any part of the body that one may look at. If not, it appears when one takes the sign in one of the six ways listed above. If it does not appear in these six ways, one should mentally grasp the swollen thing again in five ways: from the joints, apertures, lower parts, high parts, and from all sides.

a. As to the joints: One should determine the fourteen large joints of the dead body: three joints in the right arm (that is, shoulder, elbow, and wrist); three in the left arm; three in the right leg (that is, hip, knee, and ankle); three in the left leg; one joint at the neck; and one at the waist.
b. As to the apertures: There are apertures between the hands, between the legs, the inside of the belly, and the ears. Thus, one should determine the apertures. One should also note whether the eyes and mouth are closed or open.
c. As to the lower parts: One should observe the cavities of the body — the eye-cavity, the mouth, and the gullet; or, if one stands on low ground, one should consider: "I stand on low ground, the corpse lies on high ground."
d. As to the high parts: One should note whatever in the body is raised, whether it is the knee, or the breasts, or the forehead; or, if one stands on high ground, one should note: "I stand on high ground, the corpse lies on low ground."
e. From all sides: The whole body should be observed from all sides. Whatever part of it appears as the swollen part, that is where one should fix one's attention.

If the sign does not appear itself in the mind in these eleven ways, the meditator should mentally repeat "a swollen corpse, a swollen corpse", fixing the mind on the upper part of the body down to the belly, which is swollen more than the other parts.

The meditator, having grasped the sign from the swollen corpse in the way described, should practice it with well-established mindfulness. This should be done repeatedly, fully realizing and determining it with the aid of understanding and mindfulness. Standing or sitting, neither too far from nor too near to the dead body, and mentally repeating "swollen impurity, swollen impurity", thus a hundred times, thus a thousand times, with open eyes, one should grasp the sign. Then, shutting the eyes, one should reflect on it repeatedly until an exact picture is reproduced in one's

[78] Those of a different sexual orientation should adjust this restriction accordingly.

mind. Only then is it said to be "well studied". If one is not successful in this meditation, one should return to one's dwelling by the same way as one came, alone, without a companion, with mindfulness established, with senses at rest, with attention upon the object of the mental image (*uggaha nimitta*).

Coming out from the charnel ground also, one should determine the path of one's return, taking note of the marks and features. If, when one has returned to one's dwelling, one commences walking back and forth, one should do so on a piece of ground that faces in the direction of the corpse. When one sits down to meditate, one should face in the same direction. But, if in that quarter, there is a pit or a cliff, or any other obstacle, or if the ground is muddy and marshy, making it impossible for one to walk back and forth or to prepare a seat facing in that direction, one should meditate in a favorable place, with one's mind turned towards the corpse.

This meditation is dangerous for those who are not careful to follow the preliminary instructions. In the explanation of the advantage of considering the signs around the corpse, it is said that, if disciples go at an unsuitable hour to the place where the corpse is found and gaze at it to take the sign, the dead body may appear to rise up and pursue them. They may be terrified and paralyzed with the fear of this dreadful vision and even be driven insane. Indeed, of all the subjects of meditation given in the Pāḷi scriptures, there is none so terrifying as this — so much so that, in meditation on this subject, owing to its fearfulness, disciples are sometimes said to be "*jhāna-vibbhantaka*", "running away from absorption (*jhāna*)." Therefore, prudent disciples should gather all their courage, establish mindfulness, and so eliminate these terrors by thinking: "A dead body cannot rise up and pursue anyone. If the things near it — the rock, the tree, the vine — were able to come towards me on their own, then, the dead body might be able to come as well. But, just as they cannot move on their own, so, the dead body cannot move. This illusory vision that I am experiencing is generated solely by my imagination. Today, the subject of meditation is made manifest in my mind, because it is visualized so vividly. Hence, my fear is merely a shadow cast by the mental image." With these thoughts, disciples replace fear by joy and attain success in this meditation. Hence the saying: "To consider the signs around the corpse is to avoid confusion."

Those who take the sign in the eleven ways, by way of color and so forth, as explained above, will easily obtain the mental image (*uggaha-nimitta*) while looking at the corpse. Reflecting on it produces the after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*), at which point they attain *appanā samādhi*. Increasing *appanā* into the path of *vipassanā*, one attains Arahatship. Hence, it is said: "Taking the sign in the eleven ways is to bind the mind to the object."

The mental image may have been acquired, but, if it is not developed, it may vanish while the disciple attends to other duties. One may, therefore, desire to go back and develop the mental image again, but be unable to do so, because, at that time, the charnel ground may be haunted by evil spirits, or occupied by wild animals, or the sign of the swollen corpse may have disappeared, for, after one or two days, a swollen corpse becomes discolored and changed.

Of all of the subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), there is none so difficult to obtain as this one. Those who meditate on the four elements, grasp them in their own body. Those who practice mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*), grasp the sign of the breath at their nostrils. Those who practice *kasiṇa bhāvanā* make the device and meditate on it as they please. Thus, the other subjects of meditation are easy to obtain, but that of a swollen corpse, since it lasts only one or two days, is the most difficult to obtain.

Therefore, when the mental image (*uggaha nimitta*) is lost, one should sit down cross-legged and reflect on the path of one's coming and going, according to the following model:

> *I went from the monastery by this gate, took the road in such a direction, turned towards the left at such a place, towards the right at such a place. There was a rock at such a place, a hill, a tree, a bush, or a vine at such a place. Going by that route, I came upon the corpse at such a place. Standing there facing in such a direction, noting such and such objects around it, I attained the mental image. Coming out of that place, I returned by such and such a path in such a direction, and I am seated here.*

As one reflects on the path of one's coming and going from one's meditation seat as far as the place where the corpse lies, one will visualize the corpse as though it were placed in front of him or her. The mental image will appear in the same manner as before. Hence, the reflection on the path of coming and going is undertaken for the sake of visualizing the sign in the course of meditation.

A major problem arises in that, even though the ten kinds of corpses were found in ancient cemeteries and charnel grounds, where dead bodies were not buried or cremated and where flesh-eating animals and birds frequented, in modern times, it is no longer possible to obtain such corpses as subjects of meditation. Consequently, photographs of corpses in various stages of decay may be substituted. Though not as fearful as the actual objects, the same precautions described above should still be followed.

The Practice of Meditation

1. *Uddumātaka*, a "swollen corpse": By day and night, meditators should then guard that sign, applying their mind to it, thinking "swollen corpse, swollen corpse". They should then repeat it with the resolve: "Surely, by this means, I shall attain *jhāna* and increase insight, which has *jhāna* as the proximate cause, and I shall be freed from decay and death."

   Realizing the nature of the swollen corpse that has gradually become puffed up with air like a goldsmith's bellows, and, considering that the same lot will befall their own body and those of others, they should develop their meditation. Thus, they

continue, and the two signs — the mental image (*uggaha nimitta*) and the after-image (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) — arise, one after the other, as the meditation proceeds. Here is the difference between the two: the mental image appears repulsive, awful, and terrifying, inasmuch as it should be understood in order to destroy passion, while the after-image resembles a stout person lying down, but it is free from any notion of individuality. With the appearance of the after-image, sense desire has subsided, and ill will and other hindrances have been gradually eliminated, while initial application (*vitakka*), lifting the mind onto the same sign, sustained application (*vicāra*), keeping the mind upon it, rapture (ecstasy, zest) (*pīti*), causing physical elation, happiness (*sukha*), reposing the mind, and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*), concentrating the mind, arise in the *jhāna* state. Thus, at that very moment, the first form, or fine material, absorption (*rūpajjhāna*) is produced in the meditator through the image of the swollen corpse. This absorption is called "*uddumātaka*".

2. *Vinīlaka*, a "discolored corpse": After death, various changes gradually occur in a body. The parts where the flesh is full turn red, and the parts where matter gathers turn white. In general, the corpse turns blue-green, with blood and matter mixing, and the body looks as though it were covered by a blue sheet. Those who meditate on such a corpse must realize that a material body, be it that of the past, present, or future, naturally undergoes changes similar to those of this discolored corpse. The preliminary rules of this meditation, and those of the following, should be understood to be the same as those given for the swollen corpse. In fixing one's attention upon the foulness of the discolored corpse, the words to be repeated are: "*vinīlaka-paṭikkulaṁ*", which means "discolored and putrid thing".

   Here, the sign of the mental image (*uggaha-nimitta*) appears with stripes of color, but the after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) presents an unbroken appearance. The development of it induces the *jhāna* named "*vinīlaka*", after the name of the subject. The *jhāna* induced by the following subjects is also named after those subjects.

3. *Vipubbaka*, a "festering corpse": This is a corpse discharging matter from lacerated parts, or a corpse that is loathsome on account of its abominable state of suppuration. The meditation on the foulness of the festering corpse should be practiced by thinking upon it and repeating the words: "*vipubbaka-paṭikkulaṁ*", which means "festering and putrid thing". Here, the mental image (*uggaha-nimitta*) appears as a trickling fluid, but the after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) is calm and steady.

4. *Vicchiddaka*, a "fissured corpse": A corpse split in two down the middle, or one that is cut in the middle, is called a "fissured corpse". Its appearance is abhorrent because it is hollow inside. It is to be found on a battlefield, or in a forest inhabited by thieves, or in a place where criminals are executed, or in a jungle where people are mauled by wild beasts. If, on coming upon such a corpse, its various parts are found to be scattered here and there, the disciple should have someone collect them together in one place. In the absence of such help, one should do this oneself with a stick,

taking care not touch the remains with one's hands. For, by touching them, one would be familiar with them. The parts thus gathered should be placed each in its own position, a space of one inch being left between the limbs so as to present an exact sign of the fissured appearance. Then, one should direct one's attention toward it as a fissured corpse, repeating the words: "*vicchiddaka-paṭikkulaṁ*", which means "fissured and putrid thing". In this meditation, the mental image (*uggaha-nimitta*) appears as if cut in the middle, but the after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) is full and complete.

5. *Vikkhāyitaka*, a "mangled corpse": This is a corpse mangled and torn by birds and beasts of prey. Meditating on the fact that one's own material body is liable to the same fate, with feelings of disgust, one should direct one's attention to the mangled corpse, mentally repeating the words: "*vikkhāyitaka-paṭikkulaṁ*", which means "mangled and putrid thing". The mental image (*uggaha-nimitta*) of this form appears as an object mangled here and there, but the after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) appears full and complete.

6. *Vikkhittaka*, a "dismembered corpse": The corpse with its limbs detached in the course of natural decay, or scattered about and gnawed by beasts of prey, is called a "dismembered corpse". When the one sees such a corpse, one should collect the parts that have been scattered here and there and arrange them each in its place, leaving a space of one inch between the parts so as to present the appearance of a dismembered body, as in the case of the fissured corpse (*vicchiddaka*). Meditating upon it, one should focus attention upon the dismembered corpse, mentally repeating the words: "*vikkhittaka-paṭikkulaṁ*", which means "dismembered and putrid thing". Here, the sign of the mental image (*uggaha-nimitta*) appears with visible gaps, but the after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) appears full and complete.

7. *Hatavikkhittaka*, a "cut and dismembered corpse": This is a corpse that has been cut into pieces and dismembered, as just described. It may be found in the same places as a fissured corpse. One should go there and take the sign, concentrating attention upon it and mentally repeating the words: "*hatavikkhittaka-paṭikkulaṁ*", which means "cut and dismembered putrid thing". Here, the mental image (*uggaha-nimitta*) has the appearance of a wound, but the after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) appears as whole.

8. *Lohitaka*, a "bloody corpse": A bloody corpse is to be found in such places as a battlefield, bleeding from many wounds, with the limbs severed from the trunk, or covered with boils and abscesses, from which putrid matter is being discharged. On coming upon such a corpse, one should direct one's attention toward it and mentally repeat the words: "*lohitaka-paṭikkulaṁ*", which means "bloody, putrid thing". Here, the mental image (*uggaha-nimitta*) has the appearance of a red flag waving in the wind, but the after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) is settled and undisturbed.

9. *Pulavaka*, a "corpse infested with worms": This state of foulness is to be found in a corpse several days old, when masses of worms issue forth from the various openings of the body. This state may be found alike in the dead body of a person, dog, jackal, buffalo, horse, elephant, python, and so forth. One should focus attention upon it in any of these forms, mentally repeating the words: "*pulavaka-paṭikkulaṁ*", which means "worm-infested, putrid thing". The sign will appear in the body of any one of these, just as it arose for the Elder Cūḷa-Piṇḍapātika Tissa in the corpse of an elephant (*Visuddhimagga* I, 191). Here, the mental image (*uggaha-nimitta*) appears to be moving, but the after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) appears settled, like a pile of rice as large as the body.

    According to the *Yogāvacara's Manual*, of the two *nimittas*, the *uggaha-nimitta* is like hot rice-milk in a vessel kept in the oven — it appears disturbed. On the other hand, the *paṭibhāga-nimitta* is like cool rice-milk placed in a dish — it appears calm and quiet.

10. *Aṭṭhika*, a "skeleton": The skeleton referred to is the body framework of the body used as a foul object of meditation. Here, it is a general term for a group of bones linked together as a frame and for a single bone. The skeleton is mentioned in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta (The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness) (*Dīgha Nikāya* II, 296) in various ways, such as: "One may see a body discarded in the cemetery, a frame of bones (*aṭṭhisankhalika*), with flesh and blood, bound by tendons."

    Therefore, one should go, in the manner described above, to the spot where the skeleton is found and take the sign in the eleven ways, from the point of view of its color and so on. But, if one looks only upon its color, which is white, the actual sign of bone will not appear, for it may be mixed with the color of the white *kasiṇa*. Hence, one should look at it as an object of abhorrence. When one takes the sign by way of feature, one should take it separately as the bone of feet, head, neck, arms, chest, ribs, hips, shins, etc. Here, the subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) should be taken either in the whole frame of bones or in a single bone. Taking the sign in either of these, one should focus upon it, mentally repeating "*aṭṭhika-paṭikkulaṁ*", "*aṭṭhika-paṭikkulaṁ*". If the mental image (*uggaha nimitta*) arises from the whole of the frame, it shows its apertures, but its after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) will appear as an unbroken whole. If it is from a single bone, the first sign should appear terrifying on account of its loathsomeness. The after-image should produce joy, because it induces absorption (*jhāna*).

It is a peculiarity of the *asubha* meditation that the sign of its mental image is born in the mind only when the idea of the loathsomeness of the body is thoroughly grasped. Though it is tenfold in object, it is one in characteristic, that is, the repulsive, disgusting, and abominable state. A dead body is not always essential to this kind of meditation, for there are cases of those Elders (*Thera*) who obtained the requisite *jhāna* on seeing the teeth of a laughing woman, as well as at the sight of a king on his elephant

(*Atthasālinī* 200). In both cases, the meditation was the visualization of a skeleton. The essential procedure is to realize the transience of the material body, and this may be achieved even with regard to a living body, for a living body is as foul as a dead body. But, in the former, the foulness is covered by temporary adornments, and its transience does not appear as vividly as in the latter.

This ends the exposition of the ten subjects of *asubha* meditation found in the Commentaries, each of which leads only to the first form, or fine material, absorption (*rūpajjhāna*). But, in the *Yogāvacara's Manual*, they are found connected with all five *rūpajjhānas*, which does not agree with the Text or with the Commentary. The *Yogāvacara's Manual* has probably confused them with those *jhānas* connected with the supramundane (*lokuttara*) states, which are attainable by the development of insight after the attainment of the first absorption (*jhāna*).

Therefore, the wise disciple, taking the sign wherever the foulness appears, either in a living or a dead body, should proceed in meditation to the *jhāna* state. One who has attained *jhāna* through any one of these subjects is free from sensual desires and lives the life of a saint, devoid of passions. Increasing one's insight on the basis of this *jhāna*, one achieves the destruction of the taints (*āsava*), which leads one to the happiness of *nibbāna*. ■

15

Anussati Bhāvanā

Meditation on the Six Recollections

The six recollections — (1) the *Buddha*, (2) the *Dhamma*, (3) the *Sangha*, (4) morality (*sīla*), (5) liberality (*cāga*), and (6) celestial beings (*devatā*) — are cited in the scriptures as "*anussatiṭṭhāna*", "the bases, or stations, of recollection" (*Dīgha Nikāya* III, 250, 280; *Anguttara Nikāya* III, 284, 312; etc.).

They have been taken as subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) for many reasons. In the first place, they are the means especially used to gladden the mind when it has fallen prey to distress and to induce insight in the course of higher progress (cf. *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 37; Commentary on *Anguttara Nikāya* I, 40). In the second place, they provide a safeguard and a defense against the perils and fears that may arise when one meditates in lonely places, such as a forest, a cemetery, and so forth. The first three recollections (*anussati*) are especially recommended to be practiced for self-protection on those occasions when such fear and dread arise (Dhajagga Sutta, *Saṁyutta Nikāya* I, 219). In the third place, as noted in the *Visuddhimagga*, they are suitable subjects of meditation for those who are strong in faith. They also promote the growth of faith in those who did not previously possess it. The following account of the recollections is based principally upon the *Visuddhimagga*, where the most detailed exposition of them is to be found.

Recollection (*anussati*) means mindfulness (*sati*) arising repeatedly (*punappunaṁ uppajjanato*), or that mindfulness which is suitable (*anurūpa*) for a disciple who has entered the religious life through faith. The constantly arising mindfulness concerning the virtue of the *Buddha*, and the concentration of the mind on this object, which leads to access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), is termed "*Buddhānussati*", "recollection of the *Buddha*". *Dhammānussati* and the rest are to be understood in the same way.

The meditation on these six recollections is a necessary preliminary for religious aspirants, for, in this meditation, the qualities of the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma*, and the *Sangha*, which are the main objects of faith (*saddhā*), become more and more apparent. The virtue of the disciples is steadily increased, while they show themselves to be charitable and holy, mindful of morality, liberality, and all divine qualities. But, the recollections are in the highest degree in the practice of those disciples who have attained the Noble Path, as is stated in the Mahānāma Sutta (*Anguttara Nikāya* III, 284). There, they are related to Mahānāma in detail by the *Buddha* when questioned concerning the mode of life of a Stream-Enterer (*Sotāpanna*).

In the Gedha Sutta (*Anguttara Nikāya* III, 312), it is stated: "Monks, the noble disciple recollects the virtue of the *Tathāgata*: thus it is, the Blessed One is *Arahaṁ* … when he meditates thus, his mind is upright, free from slime (*gedha*), that is, craving for sense pleasures. Monks, some disciples are purified by making it (*Buddhānussati*) the object of meditation."

Here, the recollections (*anussati*) are given as the means of attaining greater purity (*visuddhi*), and, in the Sambādhokāsa Sutta (*Anguttara Nikāya* III, 314), preached by Venerable Mahā Kaccāna, they are explained as opportunities for the noble disciples (*Sotāpanna*) to attain absolute purity. In the Visākhuposatha Sutta (*Anguttara Nikāya* I, 207ff.), they are cited as the means, or subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), for purifying the mind, which will secure the great fruits of the *uposatha* practice. Again, in the Ekodasanipāta Sutta (*Anguttara Nikāya* V, 329, 333), they are recounted to show the manner of life of the noble disciples, who should practice the six recollections after developing faith (*saddhā*), energy (*viriya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*).

Thus, these recollections are given in the scriptures as the essential practices for the noble disciples, to aid them in their further attainments. Nevertheless, they are also indispensable for beginners, because they purify and strengthen their moral virtues, develop other necessary qualities in the earlier stages, and tend to produce mental purity and insight in the course of their progress. Meditation on them alone leads only to access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), and the disciple may thereby develop the *vipassanā* path for the attainment of Arahatship.

Buddhānussati Bhāvanā

The faithful disciple who wishes to develop *Buddhānussati*, or mindfulness which arises repeatedly during the recollection of the virtues of the *Buddha*, should practice it in a secluded dwelling, contemplating the supreme qualities of the *Buddha*, as given in the words of the following formula (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 49; *Vinaya* I; etc.):

> *Iti'pi so bhagavā arahaṁ sammāsambuddho vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadamma-sārathī satthā deva-manussānaṁ buddho bhagavā'ti.*

> "Such, indeed, is the Exalted One: worthy, perfectly enlightened, endowed with knowledge and conduct, supremely good, Knower of the worlds, incomparable Master of persons to be tamed, Teacher of gods and men, enlightened and exalted."

According to the scriptures, the formula itself is a general expression of the virtues of the *Buddha*, and it has been cited both as a proclamation about the *Buddha*, which is known as "*kalyāṇo kittisado*", "the noble sound of praise", and also as the

formula of the *Buddhānussati* meditation. In the mind of those who meditate on the recollection of the *Buddha*, thoughts of His virtue arise repeatedly. With the consequent exaltation of the mind, full of joy and gladness, they become increasingly strengthened in faith and devotion. They visualize the *Buddha* in His innermost being and constantly feel that they are in His presence. This feeling restrains them from actions that might debase them and maintains their self-respect and higher virtues. The disciples who meditate on this subject should thoroughly understand the meaning of each word of the formula and should meditate, recollecting the particular virtue of the *Buddha* expressed in each word. As explained in the *Visuddhimagga*, the recollection should be practiced as expressed in the words: *So bhagavā'ti'pi arahaṁ, iti'pi sammā sambuddho*, etc. This means: "He, the Blessed One is an *Arahat* for this reason, He is a Perfectly Enlightened One for this reason", and so on. Here, the expression "*iti'pi*" is to be understood as "this and that reason" (*iminā ca iminā ca kāraṇena*).

Arahaṁ

In this way, the disciple recollects that the *Buddha* is an *Arahat* for many reasons:

1. First, He is far removed (*āraka*) from all vice — He stands at a great distance from all forms of vice. He has destroyed all vice together with their innate tendencies, that is, all traces of their previous existence (*vāsanā*), by means of the Noble Path which led Him to Buddhahood.

2. Second, He has annihilated (*han*) the foes (*ari*), that is, He has killed the foes of greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) by means of the knowledge of the Noble Path.

3. Third, He has cut off (*hata*) the spokes (*ara*) of the wheel of *saṁsarā*, whose nave is made of ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving for existence (*bhava-taṇhā*), whose spokes are the constituent elements (*saṁkhāra*), whose rim is decay (*jarā*) and death (*maraṇa*), whose axle is made of the cause that produces the taints (*āsava*), and whose body is the three-fold existence (*tibhava*). At the foot of the *bodhi*-tree, with the power of virtue (*sīla*) and knowledge (*paññā*), He destroyed all the spokes of this wheel. Hence, He is called "*Arahat*".

4. Fourth, He is worthy to receive the best offerings, to be honored by both celestial beings (*devatā*) and men (*manussa*), and to be accorded the highest reverence. Thus, He is an *Arahat* because of His worthiness and truly deserves to be given the name of "*Arahat*", "The Worthy One".

5. Fifth, He does no evil whatsoever, not even in secret (*raha*), unlike ordinary worldlings (*puthujjana*), who, though claiming themselves to be virtuous, yet do

evil in secret. Hence, the Blessed One is called "*Arahat*", free from secret evil-doing.

Thus, the Blessed One is One who is far removed from vice, who has destroyed the foes of greed, hatred, and delusion, who has cut off the spokes of the wheel of cyclic existence, who is worthy to be honored, and who does no evil, not even in secret. For these reasons, He is called "*Arahat*". (Cf. *Visuddhimagga* I, 201.)

Sammāsambuddho

The Blessed One is called "*sammāsambuddha*", the "Perfectly Enlightened One", because, alone and unaided, He fully realized all that is to be realized. Unaided, He gained the knowledge of all things, recognizing knowable things (*abhiññeyya*) as knowable, comprehensible things (*pariññeyya*) as comprehensible, things that are to be abandoned (*pahātabba*) as to be abandoned, things that are to be realized (*sacchikātabba*) as to be realized, things that are to be developed (*bhāvetabba*) as to be developed. Hence, it is said (*Sutta Nipāta*, verse 558):

> *"All that which should be known is known by Me,*
> *All that which should be developed, that have I developed,*
> *Whatever is to be abandoned, that have I abandoned,*
> *Therefore, Brahmin, I am the Buddha, the Awakened One."*

Furthermore, the eye (*cakkhu*) is subject to suffering (*dukkha*); this is the Truth of Suffering. Previous craving (*taṇhā*) for the eye, together with its pleasurable objects, is the origin of suffering; this is the Truth as to the Cause of Suffering (*samudaya*). The cessation of both suffering and its cause is the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*nirodha*). The middle path that leads to the cessation of suffering is the Truth of the Noble Eightfold Path (*aṭṭhangika-magga*). Thus, taking a single object as His starting point, He knows all things — the Four Noble Truths (*ariya-sacca*), the knowledge of which He gained by his own efforts. The same may be said of the ear, the nose, the body, the tongue, and the mind. In this way, He knows the six sense objects, beginning with forms seen; the six kinds of consciousness, beginning with that which is dependent upon the presentation of stimuli to the eye; the six kinds of contact, beginning with that of the eye; the six kinds of feeling, beginning with that which arises from visual contact; the six kinds of perception, beginning with that of visual things; the six kinds of ideas, beginning with that of visual things; the six kinds of craving, beginning with the craving for visual things; the six kinds of thinking, beginning with thoughts of visual things; the six kinds of investigation, beginning with that of visual things; the five aggregates, beginning with that of the body; the ten *kasiṇas*; the ten recollections (*anussati*); the ten impurities (*asubha*), beginning with the perception of a swollen corpse; the thirty-two constituent body parts; the twelve principles (the six senses and their six objects); the eighteen elements (*dhātu*); the nine planes of existence, beginning with that of the senses; the four

form (*rūpa*), or fine material, absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*); the four formless (*arūpa*), or immaterial, attainments (*samāpatti*); the four boundless states[79] (*appamañña*); the twelve links (*nidāna*) of the doctrine of dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*)[80] — all of these are connected with the Four Noble Truths. Thus, taking one thing as the starting point, He knows all rightly, with the knowledge gained by His own efforts. Therefore, He is called "*sammā*", "fully", or "perfectly", "*sambuddha*", "Enlightened One".

Vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno

The Blessed One is endowed (*sampanna*) with knowledge (*vijjā*) and conduct (*caraṇa*). Hence, He is called "*vijjā-caraṇa-sampanna*". It should be noted that knowledge is regarded here, on the one hand, as threefold, and, on the other hand, as eightfold. The threefold knowledge consists of: (1) the knowledge of previous existences; (2) the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings; and (3) the knowledge of the destruction of the taints (*āsava*) (cf. Bhayabherava Sutta [Fear and Dread], *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 22). These three knowledges contain purely supramundane (*lokuttara*) qualities of the *Buddha*.

The eightfold knowledge is described in the Ambaṭṭha Sutta (Pride of Birth and Its Fall) (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 100) as: (1) the knowledge of insight; (2) the psychic power of the mind; (3) the different kinds of psychic power; (4) the divine eye; (5) the divine ear; (6) the ability to read the minds of others; (7) the ability to remember previous existences; and (8) the destruction of the taints (*āsava*). These eight kinds of knowledge belonging to the *Buddha's Dhammakāya*, "the body (*kāya*) of the *Dhamma*", include both His mundane (*lokiya*) and His supramundane (*lokuttara*) wisdom (*paññā*).

These different types of knowledge are called "*vijjā*" in the sense of "destroying" ignorance, of "comprehending" the nature of phenomenal existence, or of "experiencing" the happiness of *nibbāna*.

Conduct (*caraṇa*) consists of these fifteen ethical principles: (1) moral restraint; (2) restraint of the senses; (3) moderation in eating; (4) vigilance, or awareness; (5) faith, or confidence; (6) self-respect, or moral shame; (7) conscience, or moral dread; (8) great learning; (9) energy; (10) mindfulness; (11) wisdom; (12) the first absorption; (13) the second absorption; (14) the third absorption; and (15) the fourth absorption.

By means of these fifteen ethical principles, disciples lead themselves towards the happiness of *nibbāna* (cf. *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 355). Therefore, these principles are called "conduct" (*caraṇa*). Being endowed with such knowledge and conduct, the Blessed One is called "*vijjā-caraṇa-sampanna*".

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[79] The "divine abodes" (*brahmavihāra*); also called the four "immeasurables": (1) loving-kindness (*mettā*); (2) compassion (*karuṇā*); (3) sympathetic joy (*muditā*); and (4) equanimity (*upekkhā*).

[80] On the principle of conditionality, relativity, and interdependence, the whole existence and continuity of life and its cessation are explained in the discourses of the *Buddha* in a detailed formula consisting of twelve links, or interdependent causes and effects, arranged in eleven propositions. This formula is known as "dependent origination" (*paṭicca-samuppāda*).

Moreover, the fulfillment of knowledge brings about the *Buddha's* omniscience (*sabbaññutā-ñāṇa*),[81] while the fulfillment of conduct brings about His great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*). Enabled by His omniscience to understand what is advantageous as well as what is not advantageous for all beings, His great compassion leads Him to direct them into paths that will be advantageous to their spiritual development. Hence, the disciples of the *Buddha* are correctly guided and not misled, like the followers of those teachers who encourage the practice of self-mortification and other austerities, on account of their own lack of knowledge and the principles of conduct.

Sugato

Having traversed the right path, the Blessed One attained to the state of true happiness. Hence, He is called "*sugata*", literally, "well-gone". He has gone happily along this path, which is the Noble Path. Without faltering, He has gone along it to the place of security. Thus, He has "gone well" to the right place — the deathless *nibbāna*. Again, ever since He bowed at the feet of the Buddha Dīpankara, He followed the middle path, fulfilling the principles of perfection (*pāramitā*), serving the interests of all beings, and striving for their benefit, until, without having recourse to the extremes of eternalism or nihilistic views, freed alike from devotion to sense pleasure and self-mortification, He attained the happiness of *nibbāna*. Hence, He is rightly called "*sugata*", the "Happy One", the "Well-Farer".

He is also called "*sugata*" in the sense of "*sugada*", the "good speaker". He speaks rightly, choosing fitting words, words full of meaning, suited to the occasion and the circumstances. In this connection, we may recall the following (*Dīgha Nikāya* III, 134; *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 395):

> *"The words which the Tathāgata knows to be unreal, untrue, not beneficial, and which are unpleasant to others — those words the Tathāgata does not speak. The words which the Tathāgata knows to be real and true, but not beneficial nor pleasant to others — those words the Tathāgata does not speak. The words which the Tathāgata knows to be real, true, and beneficial, but not pleasant to others — for the utterance of such words, the Tathāgata waits for the proper time.*

[81] Quite contradictory views have been expressed by different Buddhist traditions on the exact nature and scope of the *Buddha's* omniscience (*sabbaññutā-ñāṇa*). According to the Theravādin School, the *Buddha's* principal claim was that He had broken the cycle of rebirth (*saṁsāra*) and that He had done this by overcoming any tendencies within Him towards greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*). The proper test of the profundity of His realization, then, is not in asking Him obscure questions on topics about which He could not possibly be expected to have knowledge, but in examining His conduct for any evidence that He fell short of His claim. Indeed, this is a test that He Himself proposes for the assessment of a sage's attainment and so of his or her reliability as a teacher. The primary means of evaluating spiritual integrity, then, is to examine the ethical purity of the sage, not his or her magical powers (should he or she have any) nor the scope of his or her mundane knowledge. The *Buddha* may or may not have had all sorts of magical abilities, but these considerations should not obscure what is most fundamentally important about Him and what He realized.

The words which the Tathāgata knows to be unreal, untrue, not beneficial, but pleasant to others — those words the Tathāgata does not speak. The words which the Tathāgata knows to be real, true, but not beneficial, yet pleasant to others — those words the Tathāgata does not speak. The words which the Tathāgata knows to be real, true, beneficial, and pleasant to others — for the utterance of such words, the Tathāgata knows the time."

Thus, the Tathāgata is also "*sugata*" in the sense that "He speaks rightly".

Lokavidū

Because the Blessed One knows the world in all its aspects, He is known as "*loka-vidu*", the "Knower of the World". For, He has known, comprehended, and understood the world (*loka*), its intrinsic nature, origin, cessation, and means of cessation. As has been said (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* I, 62; *Anguttara Nikāya* II, 48):

"Where, friend, one is not born, does not grow old, is not subject to decay, death, and rebirth, that end of the world, I say, cannot be known, seen, or approached by walking or traveling. But, neither do I say, friend, that, without going to the end of the world, one cannot bring suffering to an end. It is in this fathom-long body, friend, with its consciousness and mind, I declare, that the world lies, together with its origin, cessation, and the path leading to its cessation."

Furthermore, the world is threefold: (1) the world of conditioned phenomena (*saṁkhāraloka*), including all mental and physical phenomena; (2) the world of living beings (*sattaloka*); and (3) the physical universe (*okāsaloka*), which is composed of world-systems (*cakkavāla*) that are said to be incalculable in number.

That world also the Blessed one knows in all its aspects. He knows the conditions of beings, their inclinations, their conduct, and their intentions. Therefore, He knows the world of living beings in all respects; so also with the spacial world composed of innumerable world systems. Thus, because of this knowledge, He is the "Knower of the Worlds".

Anuttaro purisadamma-sārathī

Owing to the fact that there exists no being more virtuous than He, there can be no one higher than the Blessed One. Hence, He is called "*anuttara*", "incomparable".

In virtuous qualities, He surpasses the whole world. In the faculties of concentration (*samādhi*), wisdom (*paññā*), emancipation, or deliverance (*vimutti*), and insight into

the knowledge of emancipation (*vimutti-ñāṇadassana*), there is none equal to Him. Thus, the qualities of the *Buddha* are expressed as follows (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* I, 139):[82]

> *Then, it occurred to the Blessed One: "It would be for the sake of fulfilling an unfulfilled aggregate of virtue that I would honor, respect, and dwell in dependence upon another ascetic or Brahmin. However, in this world, with its Devas, Māra, and Brahmā, in this generation, with its ascetics and Brahmins, I do not see another ascetic or Brahmin more perfect in virtue than Myself, whom I could honor, respect, and dwell in dependence upon."*

Moreover, He leads men to be tamed (*purisadamma*), trains them and tames them, as a charioteer (*sārathi*) trains horses. Here, "*purisadamma*" means those who have not been tamed and are fit to be tamed. They include both human beings and non-human beings. The Blessed one is said to have tamed, rendered passionless, and established in virtue even animals, as well as difficult people and non-human beings. He tamed all of them by various means.

He also tames the tamed, guiding them to the first absorption (*jhāna*) and other attainments, urging them along the higher path of progress, and leading them up to Arahatship. Thus, the Blessed One is revered as the "Incomparable Master of Persons to be Tamed" (*anuttaro purisadamma-sārathī*).

Satthā deva-manussānaṁ

He instructs beings according to their character, having due regard for what is good for them in this life and in the future. As a "Teacher" (*satthar*), He is like a caravan leader (*sattha-vāha*). Just as a caravan leader guides caravans across the desert, through the haunts of robbers, through forests inhabited by wild beasts, through famine stricken and waterless regions, and, leading them out of such perils, brings them to safety, even so does the Blessed One, the Teacher, guide beings across the deserts of cyclic existence (*saṁsāra*), through birth, old age, decay and death, and brings them to safety in *nibbāna*. Hence, He is the "Teacher of gods and men".

Buddho

"*Buddha*", the "Enlightened, or Awakened, One", is the title due to the Blessed One in recognition of His knowledge of emancipation (*vimutti*), and it is the first and foremost of all names. He Himself has understood the Four Noble Truths (*ariya-sacca*), and He makes the meaning of them clear to others as well. At the foot of the *bodhi*-tree, He attained *sabbaññutā*, in a word, "omniscience", through which He realized all things,

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[82] Such passages should not be regarded as reflecting pride or as boastful declarations. They were uttered impersonally and were intended to reflect the glorious perfection of the *Buddha's* qualities.

past, present, and future pertaining to these truths. Hence, He is the "*Buddha*", Enlightened Himself and the Enlightener of others.

Bhagavā

"*Bhagavat*" is a term of respect and reverence for the best of all beings, the most distinguished in virtue. In the words of the ancients:

"Bhagavat" is the best of names,
"Bhagavat" is the name supreme;
He is holy and worthy of reverence,
Hence, He is called "Bhagavat".

According to the *Mahā Niddesa* (143): "'*Bhagavat*' is not a name given by parents or relatives. It is given to the *Buddhas*, the Enlightened Ones, upon their attainment of omniscience at the foot of the *bodhi*-tree as an appellation to be applied when complete emancipation is achieved." Thus, it is a significant name, applied to Him on account of His many outstanding qualities. "*Bhagavat*" has also the implicit meaning of "He who has destroyed", that is, He who has relinquished all attachments, eradicated all causes of passions, and broken down all fetters (*saṁyojana*) of saṁsāric existence. This shows His success in the attainments in the body of the *Dhamma* (*Dhammakāya*) and His exaltation through His superhuman qualities.

From an etymological standpoint, "*bhagavat*" is equivalent to "*bhāgyavat*", "one who possesses wealth or glory". The Blessed One, having reached the summit of charity, virtue, and other supreme qualities, possesses "wealth or glory" in terms of worldly and transcendental bliss. Such exceedingly pure qualities are attained only by real merit. He has followed the highest, noble life, achieved the detachment that is physical, mental, and spiritual, and has attained the emancipation and other states which transcend ordinary human experience. Hence, He is called "*bhagavat*", "Glorious One", though the word should be "*bhāgyavat*". Having this epithet bestowed upon Him shows that He was highly esteemed by His contemporaries. Such was His renown that He was sought after by rich and poor, learned and illiterate, men and women, rulers and ordinary citizens, householders and renunciates, for His advice and guidance.

When disciples recollect the virtues of the *Buddha* in this way, their mind, at that time, visualizes the *Buddha* as its object and is, therefore, not invaded by greed, hatred, or delusion. In the absence of these defilements (*kilesa*), their mind becomes free from the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*). The thought process, running towards the object of the *Buddha*, keeps the mind upright and steadfast, intensifying the state of concentration (*samādhi*). Thereupon, the various *jhāna* factors (*jhānanga*) arise spontaneously. In this blissful state, the mind, having the *Buddha* as its object, reposes and becomes serene. But, owing to the profundity of the *Buddha's* virtues and the pre-occupation of the disciples in recollecting the various virtues of the *Buddha*, they do not reach attainment concentration

(*appanā samādhi*) but only access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). Such concentration, arising through the recollection of the *Buddha's* virtues, is known as "*Buddhānussati*".

Those who apply themselves to *Buddhānussati* acquire true respect and reverence for the Blessed One. Their faith is unshakable, and their mindfulness well established. Filled with rapture (*pīti*) and happiness (*sukha*), they overcome fear and dread, and they are able to bear pain. A feeling of closeness with the *Buddha* arises in them, for they keep their mind constantly identified with the virtues of the *Buddha*. Their mind is directed towards Buddhahood, and, when the possibility of unwholesome action arises, they abstain from doing it, feeling shame and fear of blame, as though they were in the presence of the *Buddha* Himself.

The *samādhi* obtained through this meditation serves two purposes: (1) the purification of mind and (2) the induction of insight, as explained in the Vatthūpama Sutta (The Simile of the Cloth) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 7) and in the Visākhuposatha Sutta (*Anguttara Nikāya* I, 206). By virtue of this practice, practitioners are assured of a happy destiny should they fail to reach the higher stages on the path to Arahatship in the present life.

The *Buddhānussati* is one of the most important and most frequent practices of Buddhism, and the formula is recited at least twice a day as part of the daily observances in monasteries. It is practiced as one of the four protections (*caturārakkhā*), which are essential for the virtuous Monk. So it is said:

> *Buddhānussati mettā ca asubhaṁ maraṇasati,*
> *Iti, imā caturārakkhā, Bhikkhu bhāveyya sīlavā.*
>
> *Recollection of the Buddha (Buddhānussati), loving-kindness (mettā), the ten impurities (asubha), and mindfulness of death (maraṇasati) — these are the four protections. If a Monk develops them, he is virtuous.*

This meditation was recommended by the *Buddha* Himself as a protection for Monks who dwell in the forest, at the foot of a tree, or in a deserted place, practicing their *kammaṭṭhāna* (Dhajagga Sutta, *Saṁyutta Nikāya* I, 220).

Dhammānussati Bhāvanā

The *Dhamma* is threefold: (1) *pariyatti*, that which is to be studied; (2) *paṭipatti*, that which is to be practiced; and (3) *paṭivedha*, that which is to be penetrated or attained.

Of these, "*pariyatti*" means studying the *Dhamma* as recorded in the Pāḷi Canon, where the actual words uttered by the *Buddha* (*Buddha-vacana*) are preserved in their pristine purity; in other words, "*pariyatti*" means studying the teachings (*satthu-sāsana*) of the Blessed One. As applied to theories and principles, it comprises the whole system of the *Buddha's* teachings.

When the term "*Dhamma*" is applied to the underlying meaning, the real value of the words of the *Buddha* and to the holy life (*brahmacariya*) they prescribe, it implies the actual course of training to be followed: (1) morality (*sīla*); (2) concentration (*samādhi*); and (3) wisdom (*paññā*), all of which are to be practiced. This, then, is "*paṭipatti*".

Both study (*pariyatti*) and practice (*paṭipatti*) aim at an ultimate goal, which is the "happiness of deliverance" (*vimutti-sukkha*). This is to be realized, to be penetrated by oneself, through nine stages, namely, the four paths (*Sotāpatti*, *Sakādāgami*, *Anāgami*, and *Arahat*), the four fruitions (the fruition of each of these paths), and, finally, *nibbāna*. These are the nine stages of supramundane (*lokuttara*) achievements that are secured with the aid of studying the teachings and of putting them into practice. This is known as "*paṭivedha*".

As a subject of meditation, *Dhamma* includes only *pariyatti* and *paṭivedha*, and those who wish to attain concentration (*samādhi*) by meditating on it should establish mindfulness of the *Dhamma* by recollecting the various virtues of this twofold *Dhamma* as stated in the following formula:

> *Svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo, sandiṭṭhiko, akāliko, ehipassiko, opanayiko, paccattaṁ veditabbo viññūhī'ti.*

> "Well expounded is the *Dhamma* of the Exalted One, to be seen here and now, immediately effective, inviting one to come and see, leading inwards, to be realized by the wise, each for himself."

In the scriptures, this formula always follows that of *Buddhānussati*, and it is cited to distinguish the special qualities of the *Dhamma*, both the doctrine and the attainments. As in the case of the *Buddhānussati* meditation, practitioners should thoroughly study the meanings expressed by the words in the formula, for the words are the subjects of their mindfulness and the mental exercise of recollection. The following discussion is based upon the commentary given in the *Visuddhimagga*.

Svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo

The expression "*svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo*", which refers to the purity and completeness of the teaching, includes both the *pariyatti* and *paṭivedha* aspects, while the other expressions comprise only the *paṭivedha*, or supramundane, aspect (*lokuttara Dhamma*). The *pariyatti Dhamma* is "well expounded" because of its loveliness in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end, because of its completeness in both spirit and letter, and because of its promulgation of a pure and complete mode of religious life. Thus, we find (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 62):

> *"He teaches the Dhamma, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, complete in both spirit and letter, a perfectly complete and pure religious life."*

This *Dhamma* is good in the beginning because it explains moral purity (*sīla*), or ethical behavior, as the essential beginning of a pure religious life. It is good in the middle because it explains concentration (*samādhi*), or mental purity, as the complement of moral purity. It is good in the end because it points to full knowledge (*pariññā*) and *nibbāna* as its goal. Consequently, the followers of this *Dhamma* acquire faith (*saddhā*) and confidence as they hear it. They become free from the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) and achieve purity (*visuddhi*) and tranquility (*passaddhi*) as they practice it. Finally, insofar as they have practiced it, they realize happiness (*sukha*) as the promised result. Hence, the *Dhamma* is "well expounded".

The supramundane aspect (*lokuttara Dhamma*) is also well expounded, because it has been set forth in a course of practice that is a worthy approach to *nibbāna*, while *nibbāna* is a worthy result of the practice. Thus, it is stated (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 492):

> *"Well expounded by the Blessed One is the way to nibbāna for His disciples; the way unites with nibbāna, and nibbāna unites with the way."*

The way to *nibbāna* is termed the "middle path" (*majjhimā-paṭipadā*), because it avoids the two extremes of self-mortification and of overindulgence in sensory pleasures. The four stages and their fruitions are declared to be the "calming of the passions", for they tend to that result. The goal is proclaimed as "*nibbāna*", for it is eternal happiness. Thus, the supramundane aspect (*lokuttara Dhamma*) is "well expounded".

Sandiṭṭhiko

The expression "*sandiṭṭhiko*" implies, in the first place, that the Noble Path (*ariya-magga*) is to be practiced and realized by the individual for himself or herself. When one has practiced it, one will obtain the result, namely, the end of suffering (*dukkha*) — the elimination of the torment of the passions (*kilesappahāna*), that is, the elimination of greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) — and that, too, in the present lifetime. Hence, its result is "*sandiṭṭhiko*", "to be seen here and now" by oneself and in oneself. Hence, we find in the *Anguttara Nikāya* (I, 156):

> *"Brahmin, those who are lustful, overcome by lust, whose mind is possessed by lust, harm themselves, harm others, harm both, and, consequently, experience pain and grief. When lust is eliminated, they do no harm to themselves, nor to others, nor to both, nor do they experience pain and grief. Thus, Brahmin, is the Dhamma 'seen by oneself'."*

In the second place, those who have gained the nine stages of the supramundane state (*lokuttara Dhamma*) have done so by themselves, not by faith in others.

> *"You, yourselves, must make the effort — the Tathāgatas are only teachers."*

Those who aspire to reach these nine stages should also achieve them by self-conviction. Wherefore, it is "*sandiṭṭhiko*", "to be seen here and now" by oneself and in oneself.

Akāliko

Unlike the mundane (*lokiya*) type of virtue, which takes time to yield its fruit, that of the supramundane state is not subject to time — its result is immediate. Hence, it is "*akāliko*", "immediately effective". This statement is made with reference to the Noble Path.

Ehipassiko

This *Dhamma* is worthy to be taught to others, as it were, inviting them to "come and see" for themselves. This ninefold transcendental state, because of its reality and purity, which make it a most precious thing, is entitled to be the reason for such an invitation as "come and see". Therefore, the expression "*ehipassiko*" is appropriate.

Opanayiko

The *Dhamma* "leads inward" by means of continuous practice and strenuous effort, for the result is worthy of such effort. Moreover, it leads to inward development as those transcendental qualities are accumulated in the mind by realization, for it leads to the eternal happiness of *nibbāna*. Thus, it is "*opanayiko*", "leading inward".

Paccattaṁ veditabbo viññūhī'ti

The *Dhamma* must be "realized by the wise, each for himself". For the disciple is not purified from his vices because others have followed the path, just as the son is not purified on account of the purity attained by his father or mother.

> *"By oneself, indeed, is evil done; by oneself is one defiled. By oneself is evil left undone; by oneself, indeed, is one purified. No one can purify another."*

All must follow the path for themselves; they must attain the fruit by their own efforts. Therefore, this *Dhamma* is not to be looked upon as something that is to be obtained through the benevolence of others. It should be seen, realized, and enjoyed by the wise in their own minds. Thus, the expression "*paccattaṁ veditabbo viññūhī'ti*", "to be realized by the wise, each for himself".

The disciple, thus realizing the virtues of the *Dhamma*, in due course attains to the state of access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), and his mind becomes free from all hindrances. But, here also, as in the *Buddhānussati* meditation, the disciple does not attain to the stage of attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*), because the virtue of

the *Dhamma* is so profound as to be difficult to apprehend, and the recollection of its various qualities requires such intentness. But, inasmuch as his mind is free from all hindrances, it can attain full concentration, which renders it apt and fit for the development of insight that will finally lead him to the happiness of *nibbāna*.

Sanghānussati Bhāvanā

"*Sangha*" literally means "assembly", and it is the general term applied to the order of Buddhist Monks and Nuns. But, in the *Sanghānussati bhāvanā*, as a subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) and as one of the three refuges, *Sangha* refers only to the order of those Noble Ones (*ariya-sangha*) who have attained the four paths (*Sotāpatti*, *Sakādāgami*, *Anāgami*, and *Arahat*) and the four fruitions (the fruition of each of these paths). The disciple who wishes to meditate on this subject should do so in solitude and seclusion, recollecting the virtues of the Noble Order of the *Buddha's* disciples as noted in the following formula (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 181; *Anguttara Nikāya* I, 208):

> *Supaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasangho; ujupaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasangho; ñāyapaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasangho; sāmīcipaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasangho; yadidaṁ cattāri purisayugāni aṭṭha purisa-puggalā esa bhagavato sāvakasangho; āhuneyyo pāhuṇeyyo dakkhiṇeyyo añjalikaraṇīyo anuttaraṁ puññakkhettaṁ lokassā'ti.*
>
> "The Order of the Exalted One's disciples who have practiced well; the Order of the Exalted One's disciples who have practiced rightly; the Order of the Exalted One's disciples who have practiced correctly; the Order of the Exalted One's disciples who have practiced properly — the four pairs of persons, the eight types of persons —; *that* is the Order of the Exalted One's disciples, worthy of offerings and hospitality, worthy of gifts and respect, incomparable field of merit for the world."

Here, "practiced well" means having attained to the right path, the path that does not turn from the goal, the direct path that conforms to the *Dhamma* and the disciplinary rules. This path, being "straight" (*uju*), not crooked, is spoken of as *ñāya*, "righteous". Since it conforms to the *Dhamma*, it is called "*sāmīci*", "proper", or "law-abiding". Therefore, the order of the Noble Ones (*ariya-sangha*) who have attained to this path is called "well practiced, upright, righteous, law-abiding".

Of such disciples, those who have attained to the Noble Path are "well practiced" in that they have accomplished their training in right discipline and correct behavior, for it is through right discipline and correct behavior that they have attained the highest goal. Further, they are "well practiced" because they behave according to the instructions of the well-proclaimed *Dhamma* and the disciplinary rules. They are "upright" because they have practiced the middle path that is free from the two extremes, free from "crooked"

words, thoughts, and deeds. They are “righteous” because they have advanced towards *nibbāna*, which is also called “righteous” (*ñāya*). They are “law-abiding” because they have conducted themselves in accordance with the disciplinary rules, for it is the behavior appropriate to their status and worthy of the respect that they receive from the pious.

Moreover, regarding the expression “four pairs of persons” (*cattāri purisa-yugāni*), it should be noted that one who has attained to the first path (*sotāpatti*) and another who has attained to its fruition are taken together to make one pair. There are, thus, “four pairs” of Noble Ones (*ariya-puggala*) derived from the four paths (*magga*) and then the four fruitions (*phala*), or results — eight types altogether.

In addition, the “eight types of persons” (*aṭṭha-purisa-puggalā*) are these eight types taken separately — one is established in the first path, and another in its fruition. In this way, there are eight individuals representative of those who are established in: (1) *Sotāpatti-magga* and (2) *Sotāpatti-phala*; (3) *Sakadāgāmi-magga* and (4) *Sakadāgāmi-phala*; (5) *Anāgāmi-magga* and (6) *Anāgāmi-phala*; and (7) *Arahatta-magga* and (8) *Arahatta-phala*.

It will be seen that, while the “four pairs of persons” are taken from the four types of paths (*magga*) and fruitions (*phala*), the “eight types of persons” exemplify the eight psychological stages of attainment in the paths. Thus, these “four pairs of persons”, each pair representing one complete stage of attainment, but also regarded as “eight types of persons”, showing the psychological levels of attainment, constitute the Noble Order of the Blessed One.

In the expression “worthy of offerings” and so on, “offering” (*āhuna*) means something well prepared, even brought from a distance, and offered to the virtuous. It implies here the four requisites of those who live an ascetic life (clothing; food obtained as alms; dwelling place; and medicine). The Noble Order is worthy of this offering, and the giver thereby acquires much merit (*puñña*). Hence, the phrase “worthy of offerings” (*āhuneyyo*). The word “*āhuna*” has also been explained as having the sense “*āhavanīya*”, “to be offered in the form of sacrifice”. There are those who believe that if something is to be offered to Brahmā with a view to receiving great reward, it should be offered as a fire sacrifice.[83] To such individuals, therefore, fire sacrifice is the best of all offerings (*aggi-hutta mukhā yaññā — Sutta Nipāta*, Sela Sutta [I, 568]), for it yields great reward. But, if one truly wishes to make an offering in order to receive great reward, surely, the *Sangha* is the worthy recipient. What is offered to them bears much fruit. In the words of the *Dhammapada* (verse 107; cf. also *Visuddhimagga* 220):

> *“Better than tending the sacrificial fire in the forest for a hundred years is paying homage, even if only for a moment, to one living in wisdom.”*

Regarding the phrase “[worthy of] hospitality” (*pāhuṇeyyo*), it should be noted that welcoming of guests and the open-hearted reception and entertainment of friends and beloved relatives are included in the term “hospitality” (*āguntuka-dāna*).

[83] The reference here is to Hindus.

The *Sangha* of the Blessed One is worthy of all such offerings and hospitality, for, except during the actual lifetime of the *Buddha*, there is no guest comparable to a member of the *Sangha*. However, this is not all — the members of the *Sangha* are truly homeless (*abbokkiṇṇa*) and endowed with admirable and pleasing qualities.

The next description is "worthy of gifts" (*dakkhiṇeyyo*). A gift is said to be "*dakkhiṇā*" when it is given by those who have faith in the next world and believe that they will be there to reap the reward of their generosity. The members of the *Sangha* are worthy to receive such a gift, because they have the ability to make it abundantly fruitful in merit. Hence, the term "worthy of gifts".

The members of the *Sangha* are "[worthy of] respect" (*añjalikaraṇīyo*), such as is made by placing clasped hands upon the forehead. They are, therefore, declared to be "worthy of salutation". Furthermore, the merit proceeding from life in the *Sangha* is conducive to every kind of benefit and to true happiness in the world. Thus, the *Sangha* is hailed as "the incomparable field of merit for the world" (*anuttaraṁ puññakkhettaṁ lokassā'ti*).

When the disciple thus recollects the virtues of the *Sangha*, his mind is not invaded by greed (*lobha*), nor by hatred (*dosa*), nor by delusion (*moha*), but is upright and joyful, free from all hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*). Then, the absorption factors (*jhānanga*) arise in him at the same time. But, because of the profundity of the virtues of the *Sangha* and the intentness required for the recollection of the various virtues, *samādhi* develops only to the level of access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*).

Those who constantly practice the recollection of the *Sangha* come to have respect and faith in it and are not overcome by fear and dread. They are able to bear pain and to form the idea that they are living with the *Sangha*, and their mind aims at attaining the virtues of the *Sangha*. If, developing this mindfulness of the virtues of the *Sangha*, they fail to reach Arahatship in the present life, certainly, they are assured of a happy destiny.

Sīlānussati Bhāvanā

Those who wish to develop the meditation on moral virtues (*sīlānussati bhāvanā*) should retire into seclusion and reflect upon their own moral purity thus (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* II, 70):

> *Aho vata me sīlāni akhaṇḍāni, acchiddāni, asabalāni, akammāsāni, bhujissāni, viññuppasaṭṭhāni, aparamaṭṭhāni, samādhisaṁvattanikānī'ti.*

> "Verily, my moral virtues (*sīla*) are unbroken, untorn, unimpaired, unblemished, unfettered, praised by the wise, uninfected, conducive to concentration."

In this meditation, a householder should reflect upon the form of *sīla* appropriate to a householder, but a Monk or Nun should each reflect upon his or her own particular form of *sīla*.

When the disciple reflects upon the virtue of his own *sīla*, his mind is not invaded by greed (*lobha*), nor by hatred (*dosa*), nor by delusion (*moha*), but is joyful and upright because of the virtue of *sīla*. As in the previous cases, the absorption factors (*jhānanga*) arise in him at the same time, in the state of access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). The disciple who practices this *silānussati* becomes ardent in his moral training, leads a pure, faithful life, free from fear and blame, and sees danger in the minutest fault. Should he be unable to attain complete perfection in the present life, he is bound to enjoy a happy destiny.

Cāgānussati Bhāvanā

Those who wish to develop the meditation on liberality (*cāgānussati*[84] *bhāvanā*) should constantly be giving alms to worthy alms-seekers[85] as well as giving gifts to others. Otherwise, at the beginning of their meditation, they should make the resolve:

> "From this day onwards, so long as there is anyone to receive, I shall not eat without making an offering, even though it is just a handful."

On the day that they make this resolution, they should give some gift, as far as their circumstances permit, to a person who is worthy and distinguished for virtue, and, taking this as the object of their meditation, they should meditate in seclusion, reflecting upon the virtue of liberality as follows (*Anguttara Nikāya* III, 313; etc.):

> *Lābhā vata me, suladdhaṁ vata me, yo'haṁ maccheramalapariyuṭṭhitāya pajāya vigatamalamaccherena cetasā viharāmi, muttacāgo, payatapāṇī, vossaggarato, yācayogo, dānasaṁvibhāgarato'ti.*

> "Indeed, it is a gain to me, a great gain, that I, among people oppressed by the taint of stinginess, live with mind free from this taint, generous, clean of hands, delighting in dispensing [alms] to those who seek them, delighting in distributing gifts."

Thus, when they recollect their own liberality, which has such qualities as freedom from the taint of miserliness, their mind is not invaded by greed, nor by hatred, nor by delusion, but is upright and strengthened with the mindfulness of liberality. As in

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[84] *Cāga* means "willingness to give or share freely, liberality, generosity". *Cāga* is one of the "blessings" (*sampadā*), one of the "foundations" (*adhiṭṭhāna*), one of the "recollections" (*anussati*), and one of the "treasures" (*dhana*). Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), p. 45.

[85] That is, *Bhikkhus* and *Bhikkhunīs*.

the previous cases, when their mind is freed from the hindrances and concentrated upon this subject, the *jhāna* factors arise at the same time, in the state of access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). This is called "*cāgānussati*", since it arises through the recollection of the qualities of liberality. Those who practice this recollection are all the more intent upon liberality and become free from covetousness (*abhijjhā*[86]). They live with constant regard for friendliness and, being endowed with confidence and cheerfulness, are assured of a happy destiny.

Devatānussati Bhāvanā

Those who wish to develop the meditation on celestial beings (*devatānussati bhāvanā*) should be endowed with such qualities as faith (*saddhā*), energy (*viriya*), and mindfulness (*sati*), which are associated with the Noble Path, and should then recollect their own virtue, taking the celestial beings as examples, thus (*Anguttara Nikāya* I, 210; III, 287; V, 329):

> *Santi devā cātummahārājikā, santi devā tāvatiṁsā, yāmā'tusitā, nimmānaratino, paranimmitavasavattino. Santi devā brahmakāyikā, santi deva tatuttariṁ. Yathā-rūpāya saddhāya samannāgatā tā devā ito cutā tattha uppannā, mahyampi tathā-rūpā saddhā saṁvijjati. Yathārūpena sīlena sutena, cāgena, yathārūpāya paññāya samannāgatā tā devā ito cutā tattha uppannā, mayhampi ... tathārūpa pañña saṁvijjati.*

> "There are celestial beings who are the Four Kings; there are celestial beings in the realms of Tāvatiṁsa, Yāma, Tusita, Nimmānarati, and Paranimmitavasavatti. There are celestial beings of the Brahma-class; there are celestial beings higher than those. With whatever faith these celestial beings, on passing away hence, were reborn there, in me also, there is such faith. With whatever virtue, learning, liberality, and wisdom these celestial beings, on passing away hence, were reborn there, in me also, there is such virtue, learning, liberality, and wisdom."

When the disciple thus recollects his own virtue, learning, liberality, and wisdom, comparing them with those of the celestial beings (*devatā*), at that moment, his mind becomes freed from greed, hatred, and delusion. It is, therefore, said of him (*Anguttara Nikāya* III, 287):

> "Mahānāma, when the noble disciple recollects his own virtue and that of celestial beings …, then his mind is not invaded by greed, hatred, and delusion."

[86] *Abhijjhā*, "covetousness", is a synonym for *lobha*, "greed", and *taṇhā*, "craving". Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), p. 2.

It should be noted that, according to the Commentary, disciples should first contemplate the virtue, learning, liberality, and wisdom of the celestial beings and, afterwards, those that exist in themselves. When they meditate upon this, their mind becomes free from the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*), and the *jhāna* factors (*jhānanga*) arise, as with the other recollections (*anussati*), in the state of access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). This is called *devatānussati*, since it arises through the recollection of one's own virtues as well as those of celestial beings.

Those who practice this meditation are dear to the celestial beings, are beloved by them, and attain a higher state of virtue. If they make no further progress in their present life, they are bound to enjoy a happy destiny. ■

16

Maraṇasati Bhāvanā

The meditation on death is given as a separate practice (*Anguttara Nikāya* III, 204; IV 317; etc.) under the name of "*maraṇasati bhāvanā*", "mindfulness of death". It virtually belongs to *vipassanā* meditation, for disciples should develop it while holding the perception of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*).

Meditation on death is one of the four objects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) that are most suitable for those of an intellectual disposition and is placed in the group of the ten recollections (*anussati*) as found in the *Visuddhimagga*. Although, among present day Buddhists, it is popularly termed "*maraṇānussati bhāvanā*",[87] it occurs in the Pāḷi Canon, as well as in the *Visuddhimagga*, under the name "*maraṇasati*".

Therein, "*maraṇa*", "death", is defined as "*jīvitindriya-upaccheda*", "the cutting off of the life faculty" of one form of existence (*ekabhava-pariyāpanna*). Therefore, the word is not here intended to denote any of the following three types of death: (1) the complete cessation of life (*samuccheda-maraṇa*), that is, the final death of *Arahats*, which is the cessation of existence in the world of change; (2) momentary dying (*khaṇika-maraṇa*), that is, the momentary breaking up of the mental and physical processes (*sankhārānaṁ khaṇabhanga sankhātaṁ*); and (3) that which is known as "*sammuti-maraṇa*", that is, the "death" of inanimate objects, an expression which is commonly used in speaking of a dead tree, dead metal, and so on.

The death that is intended here is twofold: (1) timely death (*kālamaraṇa*) and (2) untimely death (*akālamaraṇa*). The former, timely death, is threefold: (1) that which comes through the extinction of merit (*puññakkhaya*), that is, the termination of the power of previous *kamma*; (2) that which comes through the extinction of the term of life (*āyukkhaya*); and (3) that which comes through the extinction of both *kamma* and the term of life.

Untimely death is that which comes while the power of reproductive *kamma* (*janaka-kamma*)[88] and the term of life (*āyukkhaya*) are still unexhausted, as, for example, that produced by accident, sickness, or suicide. All this is included in the term "the cutting off of the life faculty", and the recollection of it constitutes *maraṇasati*, "mindfulness of death". The access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) attained through this practice is also termed "*maraṇasati*".

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[87] Sanskrit *maraṇasmṛti-bhāvanā*.

[88] Also known as "generative *kamma*", or "regenerative *kamma*".

Disciples who wish to develop *maraṇasati* should retire to a secluded place and focus their attention by thinking: *maraṇaṁ bhavissati, jīvitindriyaṁ upacchijjissati*, "death will take place, the life faculty will be cut off"; or simply: "*maraṇaṁ*, *maraṇaṁ*", "death, death". The repetition of either of these expressions will form the preliminary exercise. Disciples should practice them in the right and proper way, that is, with the presence of mindfulness (*sati*), with a feeling of religious emotion (*saṁvega*[89]), and with understanding (*ñāṇa*). But, they should not begin by recalling the death of individuals such as loved ones, hostile persons, or those towards whom they are indifferent. Sorrow arises in recalling the death of loved ones, just as it arises in the mother who recalls the death of her beloved child; gladness or unsympathetic feelings arise in recalling the death of hostile persons, just as they arise in those who rejoice when they recall the death of their enemies; the feeling of religious emotion does not arise in recalling the death of people towards whom one is indifferent any more than it arises in a cremator on seeing a corpse; fear arises at the thought of one's own death, just as it arises in a fearful man who beholds a murderer. Therefore, on seeing beings who have met an untimely death or who have died naturally, or reflecting on the death of those who are famous, disciples should meditate upon death referring to themselves, applying mindfulness (*sati*), a feeling of religious emotion (*saṁvega*), and understanding (*ñāṇa*), which balance the mind, keeping it apt and fit for the mental object (*ārammaṇa*). When they thus proceed in the right way, the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) disappear, mindfulness is established with death as its object, and concentration (*samādhi*) attains the level of access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*).

If this does not work, disciples should contemplate death in these eight ways:

1. Just as a murderer with weapon in hand might threaten one saying "I will kill you", so death approaches and threatens living beings. Thus, it should be kept in mind.

2. Or death should be recalled with these considerations: As all wealth, power, and achievements in this world come to an end, so a prosperous life ends in death, as has been written (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* I, 102):

   "Just as mountains of solid rock,
   Massive, reaching to the sky,
   Might draw together from all sides,
   Crushing all in the four quarters —
   So aging and death come
   Rolling over living beings —

   "Nobles, Brahmins, traders, serfs,
   Outcasts, and scavengers:

[89] *Saṁvega* means "agitation, fear, anxiety; thrill, religious emotion (caused by contemplation of the miseries of this world)".

They spare none along the way
But come crushing everything.

"There is no ground there for elephants,
Nor for chariots, nor for infantry.
One cannot defeat them by subterfuge,
Or buy them off by means of wealth.

"Therefore, a person of wisdom here,
Out of regard for his own good,
Steadfast, should place his faith
In the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha.

"When one conducts oneself according to the Dhamma
With body, speech, and mind,
One is praised here in the present life,
And, after death, one rejoices in the next life."

3. It should be recollected by inferring one's own death from that of others: "All those in the past who had the greatness of fame, wealth, merit, power, and learning have passed away in death. Those who attained the summit of spiritual progress, such as the *Buddhas* and *Pacceka Buddhas*, all have passed away in death. Like those great ones, I, myself, have to die." Thus, it should be recollected by way of inference.

4. At all events, death is inevitable, because this body is subject to all the causes of death such as the many kinds of diseases, as well as other external dangers. At any moment, any of these may beset the body and cause it to perish. In this connection, the Blessed One said (*Anguttara Nikāya* III, 306):

   "Here, Monks, a Monk, when the day is gone and the night has fallen, reflects thus: 'Many are the possible causes of my death — a snake may bite me, a scorpion may sting me, a spider may bite me, and, as a result, death may come to me. Moreover, some danger may befall me, or I may trip and fall, or the food I have eaten may poison me, or my heart or other internal organ may cause me trouble, or my breathing may become constricted, and, as a result, I may die or encounter problems'."

   Thus, death should be recollected by way of the body and its liability to dangers.

5. The life of beings is bound up with inhalation and exhalation, with postures, with heat and cold, with the four elements, and with food. Life continues only when it is supported by the regular functioning of the breath inhaled and exhaled. When

the process of breathing ceases, one dies. Again, life proceeds when it is supported by the regular use of the four postures — an excess of any one of them causes the vitality to be weakened. It also requires a certain measure of heat and cold — excessive heat or cold can be fatal. Moreover, life endures only so long as the proper order of the four elements is maintained — their disturbance may cause death. Life also needs to be supported by food — otherwise, it will fail. Thus, death should be recollected by considering the frailty of life and its dependence upon these things.

6. Life in this world is uncertain, because it cannot be determined in terms of time, place, or destiny. Thus, it is said (*Sutta Nipāta*, Salla Sutta, 574—575):

> *"Life is unpredictable and uncertain in this world. Life here is difficult, short, and bound up with suffering. A being, once born, is going to die, and there is no way out of this. When old age arrives, or some other cause, then death is sure to follow. This is the way it is with living beings."*

Corresponding to this, there is a passage in the *Visuddhimagga* (I, 236):

> *Life, disease, time, place, and destiny. Signless are these five, unknown to the world of the living.*

Life is "signless", for it cannot be determined or reduced to a rule, as "One shall live so long, no more, no less." Life may end at any point — in the womb, in the early months or years of life, as a teenager, as an adult, that is, at any time within or beyond a hundred years.

Sickness cannot be predicted — one may die of any kind of disease at any time. The time of death is also unknown, since it cannot be determined, as: "One shall die at this time (day or night), not at any other". Beings can die in the morning, noontime, or evening, on any day, during any month, or during any year, asleep or awake. The place where death may occur or where the body shall lie can also not be determined, as: "One shall die in this place, not at any other." "The body shall be laid to rest in this place, not at any other." One's destiny is also unknown, since it cannot be determined, as: "One who passes away from here will be reborn there."

Thus, death should be recollected by considering that these five things are uncertain.

7. The life of human beings is short. Those who are long-lived live only a hundred years or a little more. Hence, the Blessed One said (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* I, 108):

> *"Monks, this lifespan of human beings is short. One has to go on to the future life. One should do what is wholesome and lead the holy life. For one who*

has taken birth, there is no avoiding death. One who lives long, Monks, lives but a hundred years or a little longer."

Thus, mindfulness of death should be developed by considering life as being limited to a short duration.

8. Strictly speaking, the life of beings is exceedingly short, indeed, lasting merely for one moment of consciousness. Just as a chariot wheel, in rolling, rolls at only one point of the wheel, and resting, rests only at one point, in exactly the same way, the life of a living being lasts only for the period of a single thought. As soon as that thought has ceased, the being is said to have ceased. Here, from a psychological point of view, the duration of life is limited by one mental instant (*cittakkhaṇa*), for life is experienced only during the instant of mental existence, that is to say, for the three instants of thought: (1) arising (*uppāda*); (2) duration (*ṭhiti*); and (3) ceasing (*bhanga*) — life endures only for the existing instant. Therefore, a being is said to exist only while a "*ṭhiti*" exists. In this connection, the following verse may be cited from the *Visuddhimagga*:

All life and all existence here and now,
With all its joy and all its pain,
Depend all on a state of mind,
And that moment quickly passes by.

The aggregate entities that have passed away,
At death as well as during life,
Have all alike become extinguished,
And they will never arise again.

Out of the unseen did they arise,
Into the unseen do they pass.
Just as lightning flashes for but an instant,
So do they flash and pass away.

Thus, as long as continuity of mind lasts, the continuity of life proceeds. When the mind ceases to function in an individual organism, life also ceases, and this is called "death". Thus, mindfulness of death should be developed by considering the momentary nature of life.

When disciples thus contemplate death in one of these eight ways, their mind, through constant repetition, forms a habit, and mindfulness is established with death as its object; the hindrances disappear, and the *jhāna* factors become manifest. Death being a natural occurrence, and often the cause of anxiety, mindfulness of it leads only to access

concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). Even a brief practice of this meditation, conducted with proper attention, bears great fruit (*Anguttara Nikāya* IV, 318):

> *"Monks, the Monk who develops mindfulness of death thus: 'It is great, indeed, if I were to live just long enough for me to breathe in after breathing out, or to breathe out after breathing in, while attending to the Blessed One's teaching — surely, much is thereby done by me.' These monks are said to be leading a life of vigilance, developing keen mindfulness of death for the destruction of the taints."*

Those disciples who devote themselves to this meditation are always vigilant and take no delight in phenomenal existence. They give up hankering after life. They avoid evil-doing. They are free from craving as regards the requisites of life. Their perception of impermanence (*anicca*) becomes established. As a result of these things, they realize the suffering (*dukkha*) and selfless (*anattā*) nature of existence. At the time of death, they are devoid of fear and remain mindful and self-possessed. If, in this present life, they fail to attain to deathlessness (*nibbāna*), upon the dissolution of the body, they are bound for a happy destiny. ■

17

Kāyagatāsati Bhāvanā

According to the *Visuddhimagga*, the meditation on mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati bhāvanā*) had never been practiced prior to the *Buddha*, nor does it appear within the scope of any of the other Indian religious systems. It is praised in various ways by the *Buddha* in different *suttas*, for example (*Anguttara Nikāya* I, 43):

> *"There is one state, Monks, which, being developed and repeatedly practiced, leads to great religious emotion, great benefit, great freedom from bondage, great mindfulness and self-possession, the attainment of knowledge and insight, the happy state in this visible life, and the realization of the fruit of knowledge and release. What is that one state? [It is] mindfulness of the body…"*

Again (*Anguttara Nikāya* I, 45f.):

> *"Those who do not enjoy mindfulness of the body do not enjoy deathlessness (amata); those who enjoy mindfulness of the body enjoy deathlessness. Those who have not enjoyed mindfulness of the body have not enjoyed deathlessness; those who have enjoyed mindfulness of the body have enjoyed deathlessness. Those who have neglected mindfulness of the body have neglected deathlessness; those who have not neglected mindfulness of the body have not neglected deathlessness."*

In the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta (The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 22), meditation on mindfulness of the body is given as a part of the whole method for attaining *nibbāna*. There, it is called "contemplation of the body" (*kāyānupassanā*), and it contains fourteen parts. It also occurs in the Kāyagatāsati Sutta (Mindfulness of the Body) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 119) as a subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), with the same fourteen divisions. Here, it is an independent method of meditation productive of great results. The description opens with:

> *"How, Monks, should mindfulness of the body be developed, and how should it be practiced in order to yield great results, to be conducive to great benefit? Herein, a Monk, having gone to the forest or the foot of a tree or an empty house sits down cross-legged and upright, setting mindfulness before him…"*

As a subject of *samādhi* meditation, mindfulness of the body is recommended for those of a lustful disposition, and, in this connection, the *Visuddhimagga* gives the following account: It is stated that *kāyagatāsati kammaṭṭhāna* appears (in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta) in fourteen divisions. Three of these fourteen divisions — the four postures, the fourfold self-possessions, and contemplation of the four elements — are included under *vipassanā* meditation. The nine divisions of cemetery contemplation are also included under *vipassanā* meditation as "*ādīnavānupassanā*", "contemplation of the wretchedness (of the body)", while, of these, that which pertains to *samādhi* is explained under the meditation on impurities (*asubha bhāvanā*). The remaining two divisions are the mindfulness of breathing and the contemplation of the loathsomeness of food (*āhāre paṭikkūla saññā*). Only these two are given as subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) in the system of *samādhi* meditation. The mindfulness of breathing is given as a separate subject of meditation under the name "*ānāpānasati*". That which is to be explained here as mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*) is the meditation on the thirty-two fundamental body parts as set forth in the following formula:

> *"Again, Monks, the Monk considers this body, limited by the skin from the sole of the foot upwards, from the crown of the head downwards, as full of impure things of various kinds — there are in this body: hairs of the head (kesā); hairs of the body (lomā); nails (nakhā); teeth (dantā); skin (taco); flesh (maṁsaṁ); sinews (nahāru); bones (aṭṭhi); marrow (aṭṭhimiñjaṁ); kidneys (vakkaṁ); heart (hadayaṁ); liver (yakanaṁ); diaphragm (kilomakaṁ); spleen (pihakaṁ); lungs (papphāsaṁ); intestines (antaṁ); bowels (antaguṇaṁ); stomach (udariyaṁ); excrement (karisaṁ); brain (matthalungaṁ); bile (pittaṁ); phlegm (semhaṁ); pus (pubbo); blood (lohitaṁ); sweat (sedo); fat (medo); tears (assu); skin grease (vasā); saliva (khelo); nasal mucus (singhānikā); oil of the joints (lasikā); and urine (muttaṁ)."*

The body, being the instrument of consciousness on the physical plane, supports the mind in its various activities, but it becomes a hindrance and a bondage when it is not properly understood. It is just like an instrument which has been made for a good purpose but which becomes a fatal weapon when it is wrongly used through absence of mindfulness. There may be but few educated persons who do not understand the nature of the physical body. Nevertheless, all who have been misled by various passions and misconceptions have been deluded by the illusory appearance of the physical body. Hence, the vast sum of selfishness and lustfulness arise, along with the torments they cause, which are to be eliminated only by decreasing attachment to the physical body.

According to the *Buddha's* teaching, attachment to the physical body (*rūpa-rāga*) is one of the ten fetters (*saṁyojana*) that bind beings to the wheel of *saṁsāra*, the repetition of birth and death, the cause of woe and pain. Therefore, those who endeavor to put an end to their *saṁsāra* must not only free themselves from the bondage of the physical body, but, likewise, remove the fetters of emotional feeling and attachment

together with the conception of individual personality. But this is only possible when they analyze the constituent parts of the body, not through the study of anatomy, but as disciples who harbor no impression of individuality and who do not shrink from seeing existence as it is. The method of pursuing this analysis is given in the following formula, together with commentarial exposition:

> *"This body of the four elements, covered with the skin, is not made of anything pure or valuable such as pearl, ruby, gold, silver, saffron, camphor, or fragrant scents, but it is made of those things which, when they are taken separately and considered as they are, lead to the feeling of the loathsome and the putrid. When a person analyzes this body with right mindfulness, he finds that its constituent parts are humble elements of various kinds such as hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, bones, and so on, the intrinsic nature of which is not only impure and disgusting, but also subject to illness."*

The list containing the thirty-two fundamental body parts is so arranged that each part, taken separately, or each group of them, forms a separate subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*) in the course of meditation (*bhāvanā*). In the *Yogāvacara's Manual* (pp. 58—63), they are treated separately as thirty-two *kammaṭṭhānas*, and, in the *Visuddhimagga*, they are arranged in six groups, the first four of which contain five parts, while the last two each contain six parts. The following discussion is based upon the practical instructions given in the *Visuddhimagga*.

Disciples who wish to attain Arahatship through the practice of this *kammaṭṭhāna* should approach a qualified teacher for instruction. The teacher should give them proper instructions, explaining the sevenfold method of study and the tenfold method of practice.

The Sevenfold Method of Study

Mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*) should be studied in the following seven ways: (1) by word; (2) by heart; (3) by color; (4) by shape; (5) by direction; (6) by place; and (7) by limit:

1. By word: With this subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), even those well versed in the three *Piṭakas*[90] should, at the time of meditation, first make a verbal recitation. To those who do so, the subject of meditation becomes clear, as it did to the two disciples who received this *kammaṭṭhāna* from Mahā Deva, the Elder of Malaya.[91] It is said that the Elder (*thera*), on being asked by them for a subject, gave them the formula in Pāḷi of the thirty-two body parts, saying: "Recite this for four months." Although they were well versed in two or three *Nikāyas*, they

[90] *Vinaya Piṭaka*, *Sutta Piṭaka*, and *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.
[91] The hill country in Śri Lanka.

had to recite the formula for four months before they attained success. Therefore, those who teach this subject should instruct disciples to recite the formula in six divisions and to recite them both in the direct and reverse order.

A. The first division of five should be recited in direct order as: "*Kesā, lomā, nakhā, dantā, taco*"; then, in reverse order as: "*Taco, dantā, nakhā, lomā, kesā*". This is called "*taca-pañcaka*", the five ending in the skin.
B. The second division of five (*vakka-pañcaka*) should be recited in direct order as: "*Maṁsaṁ, nahāru, aṭṭhi, aṭṭhimiñjaṁ, vakkaṁ*". In reverse order, it should be recited together with the first division as: "*Vakkaṁ, aṭṭhimiñjaṁ, aṭṭhi, nahāru, maṁsaṁ, taco, dantā, nakhā, lomā, kesā*"; then again, from "*kesā*" to "*vakkaṁ*".
C. The third division of five (*papphāsa-pañcaka*) should be recited in direct order as: "*Hadayaṁ, yakanaṁ, kilomakaṁ, pihakaṁ, papphāsaṁ*". In reverse order, it should be recited together with the first and second divisions as: "*Papphāsaṁ, pihakaṁ, kilomakaṁ, yakanaṁ, hadayaṁ, vakkaṁ, aṭṭhimiñjaṁ, aṭṭhi, nahāru, maṁsaṁ, taco, dantā, nakhā, lomā, kesā*"; then again, in direct order from "*kesā*" to "*papphāsaṁ*".
D. The fourth division of five (*matthalunga-pañcaka*) should be recited in direct order as: "*Antaṁ, antaguṇaṁ, udariyaṁ, karisaṁ, matthalungaṁ*". In reverse order, it should be recited together with the first, second, and third divisions as: "*matthalungaṁ, karisaṁ, udariyaṁ, antaguṇaṁ, antaṁ, papphāsaṁ, pihakaṁ, kilomakaṁ, yakanaṁ, hadayaṁ, vakkaṁ, aṭṭhimiñjaṁ, aṭṭhi, nahāru, maṁsaṁ, taco, dantā, nakhā, lomā, kesā*"; then again, in direct order from "*kesā*" to "*matthalungaṁ*".
E. The fifth division of six (*meda-chakka*, the six ending in *meda*) should be recited in direct order as: "*Pittaṁ, semhaṁ, pubbo, lohitaṁ, sedo, medo*". In reverse order, it should be recited together with the first, second, third, and fourth divisions as: "*Medo, sedo, lohitaṁ, pubbo, semhaṁ, pittaṁ, matthalungaṁ, karisaṁ, udariyaṁ, antaguṇaṁ, antaṁ, papphāsaṁ, pihakaṁ, kilomakaṁ, yakanaṁ, hadayaṁ, vakkaṁ, aṭṭhimiñjaṁ, aṭṭhi, nahāru, maṁsaṁ, taco, dantā, nakhā, lomā, kesā*"; then again, in direct order from "*kesā*" to "*medo*".
F. The sixth division of six (*mutta-chakka*) should be recited in directed order as: "*Assu, vasā, khelo, singhānikā, lasikā, muttaṁ*". In reverse order, it should be recited together with the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth divisions as: "*Muttaṁ, lasikā, singhānikā, khelo, vasā, assu, medo, sedo, lohitaṁ, pubbo, semhaṁ, pittaṁ, matthalungaṁ, karisaṁ, udariyaṁ, antaguṇaṁ, antaṁ, papphāsaṁ, pihakaṁ, kilomakaṁ, yakanaṁ, hadayaṁ, vakkaṁ, aṭṭhimiñjaṁ, aṭṭhi, nahāru, maṁsaṁ, taco, dantā, nakhā, lomā, kesā*"; then again, in direct order from "*kesā*" to "*muttaṁ*".

Disciples should repeat this recitation a hundred times, a thousand times, or even a hundred thousand times, for, by doing so, they become familiar with the subject, and their mind does not wander here and there. The body parts become clear and appear in a series as though they were a chain held in the hand.

2. By heart: As they recite the formula verbally, disciples should also recite it mentally, in order to learn it by heart. The verbal recitation is the cause of the mental recitation; the mental recitation assists in the penetration into their characteristics.

3. By color: Disciples should also study the body by noting the color of each part, the color of hair, for example. This reflection on color may form one of the four color *kasiṇas* referred to in the description of the first three of the eight stages of release (*vimokkha*) and of the eight spheres of mastery of control (*abhibhāyatana*) (see Chapter 5).

4. By shape, direction, place, and limit: Again, they should study them, noting their shape, direction, (that is, this part exists in the upper part of the body, while that exists in the lower part of the body, etc.), place (that is, this part exists in this range, and so on), and limit (that is, limiting the parts of the body as being above, below, around, and separating them from another according to their kind).

Thus, the subject should be thoroughly studied in these seven ways: (1) by word; (2) by heart; (3) by color; (4) by shape; (5) by direction; (6) by place; and (7) by limit.

Furthermore, the teacher should explain the subject knowing that it is expounded in such and such a *sutta* as the contemplation of loathsomeness (*paṭikkūla-manasikāra*) and in such and such a *sutta* as the contemplation of the elements (*dhātu-manasikāra*). It is described as *paṭikkūla-manasikāra* in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta (The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 22 [II, 290]) and as *dhātu-manasikāra* in the Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta (The Longer Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant's Footprint) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 28 [I, 148]) the Mahārāhulovāda Sutta (The Greater Discourse of Advice to Rāhula) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 62 [I, 414]), and the Dhātuvibhanga Sutta (The Exposition of Elements) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 140 [III, 237]). That which is spoken of as "elements" (*dhātu*) belongs to *vipassanā* meditation, and that which is spoken of as "loathsomeness" (*paṭikkūla*) belongs to *samatha* meditation.

Here, it should be understood that the *kāyagatāsati*, when meditated upon by those who realize the elemental nature of the physical body, purges the mind of misconceptions concerning ideas of individuality, and, thus, it forms the insight for the attainment of *nibbāna*. When it is practiced with feelings of disgust at the loathsomeness of the body, it cleanses the mind of passions and induces the first absorption (*jhāna*) and, so, forms the path of calm-abiding leading to insight. When one meditates upon it, taking the body parts as color objects, it produces the four form, or fine material, absorptions

(*rūpajjhāna*), as stated in the Kāyagatāsati Sutta (Mindfulness of the Body) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 119 [III, 88]). What is here explained as a *kammaṭṭhāna* is that of *paṭikkūla-manasikāra*, which belongs to tranquility meditation (*samatha bhāvanā*), leading to the first form, or fine material, absorption (*rūpajjhāna*).

The Tenfold Method of Practice

Having explained the seven ways of learning the subject, the teacher should next describe the tenfold aptitude in practice: attending in succession, not too fast, not too slow; avoiding distraction; transcending the concept (*paññatti*); changing the order; by way of attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*); and the three *suttantas*, which are explained below:

1. Herein, "attending in succession" means that disciples should, from the time of verbal recitation, contemplate the thirty-two body parts, one after the other in order, not randomly, for those whose thoughts move here and there, leaving out some parts, do not achieve success in concentration, but, instead, grow weary in mind and fail in their practice.

2. In attending to the parts in due order, disciples should not proceed too fast, omitting to note the characteristics of the parts, for, with too hurried contemplation, the subject is not clear, and, consequently, success is not achieved.

3. Contemplation of the subject that is too slow has the same result as that which is too hurried. Disciples should, therefore, meditate neither too quickly nor too slowly, but should avoid both sluggishness and undue strain in the mental process.

4. Disciples should be mindful and alert lest the mind be distracted by external objects. If the mind is distracted by external objects, the subject of meditation weakens and disappears. Therefore, they should attend mindfully, avoiding distraction.

5. When the meditation is developed, and each part of the body becomes clear to their mind and its loathsome nature is perceived, disciples should not regard them as concepts, such as hair, nails, and so on, but should steadfastly retain the thought that they are mere abominations (*paṭikkūla*). The repetition of such words as "*kesā*, *lomā*", etc. is only useful until the state of loathsomeness becomes manifest in the mind. After that, the repetition of such words should be abandoned, because even this is related to the notion of individuality. The notion of individuality obscures the fact of the existence of things as they are and is the origin of hatred, disliking, or aversion. Hence, passing beyond all consideration

of concepts, disciples should establish mindfulness upon the abstract thought that the various body parts are loathsome.

6. When, in the beginning, disciples reflect upon the thirty-two body parts in direct order, the process of reflection proceeds from "*kesā*", "hairs of the head", down to the last part, "*muttaṁ*", "urine", and stops there. When they reflect in reverse order, they return from "*muttaṁ*" up to the initial part, "*kesā*", and stop there. If, while they are doing this, any particular part is not clearly seen to be loathsome, they should omit that part and reflect on that which does become clear. When two parts are manifestly loathsome, they should reflect on the part that is more distinct. Thus, omitting those parts that are not clear, and attending to those parts that are clear, they should practice until they reach attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*).

7. Meditation on any of the thirty-two parts leads to attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*). Like the *kasiṇas*, they produce the *paṭibhāga-nimitta*, the sign, or mark, of the after-image. But that *appanā*, being the image of loathsomeness, like that of the ten impurities (*asubha*), leads only to the first absorption (*jhāna*). Taking each part separately, there are thirty-two *appanā kammaṭṭhānas* in this *kāyagatāsati*, each leading to the first *jhāna*. Thus, this should be understood by way of *appanā*.

   There are three *suttas* that must be studied by practitioners of meditation. They are the *suttas* in which *adhicitta*, *sītibhāva*, and *bojjhanga-kosalla* are explained. The teacher should explain them to his or her students as the instruction necessary for regulating their mind and keeping it fit for the work of meditation.

8. With regard to "*adhicitta*", "the development of higher thought", the following instructions are given (*Anguttara Nikāya* I, 256):

   "Monks, the Monk who is intent upon higher thought (adhicitta) should, from time to time, reflect upon these objects: the object of concentration, the object of upholding, and the object of equanimity.

   "Verily, Monks, if the Monk intent upon higher thought were to reflect only upon the object of concentration, his mind might possibly tend to a passive state… If he were to reflect only upon the object of upholding, his mind might possibly tend to restlessness… If he were to reflect only upon the object of equanimity, his mind might possibly not be well concentrated for the destruction of the taints (āsava).

   "However, Monks, the Monk who reflects, from time to time, upon the object of concentration, and upon the object of upholding, and upon the object of equanimity, his mind becomes supple, ready to act, bright, not brittle, but well concentrated for the destruction of the taints… Whatever the state to be

> *realized for higher knowledge, he is able to realize it in self-experience as he directs his finely honed mind towards it."*

This *sutta* is to be understood as describing "*adhicitta*", "higher thought".

9. Concerning "*sītibhāva*", "coolness", the following instructions are given (*Anguttara Nikāya* III, 435):

   > *"Monks, a Monk endowed with six qualities is fit to realize the peerless coolness. What are the six? Here, Monks, a Monk checks his mind when it ought to be checked, upholds his mind when it ought to be upheld, gladdens his mind when it ought to be gladdened, and balances his mind when it ought to be balanced. He is intent on noble things and delights in nibbāna. A Monk endowed with these six qualities is fit to realize the peerless coolness."*

   This *sutta* is to be understood as describing "*sītibhāva*", "coolness".

10. As for "*bojjhanga-kosalla*", "skill (*kosalla*) in the practice of the [seven] factors of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*)", has been set forth as follows (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* 112f.):

    > *"When, Monks, the mind slackens, it is then time to develop the bojjhanga of investigation, time to develop the bojjhanga of energy, time to develop the bojjhanga of ... zest. What is the reason? It is easy to uplift the slack mind with these states…"*

    This *sutta* is to be understood as describing "*bojjhanga-kosalla*", "skill in the practice of the [seven] factors of enlightenment".

Preliminary Exercise

Having studied this subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*) in seven ways and knowing the ten methods of practice, Monks and Nuns, who should live in the same monastery as their teacher, or, as an alternative or if lay practitioners, in a suitable dwelling elsewhere, should cut of all impediments and begin the preliminary exercise of reflecting upon loathsomeness.

Disciples should first grasp the sign (*nimitta*) in the hairs of the head (*kesā*) in the following manner: Plucking out one or two hairs from the head and placing them in the palm of their hand, they should note their color. They should also look at the hairs shaven or cut off from their head whenever they happen to see them. If the hairs are black, they should attend to them as "black"; if they are brown, as "brown"; if they are sandy or blond, as "sandy" or "blond"; if they are red or auburn, as "red" or "auburn"; if

they are gray or white, as "gray" or "white"; if they are mixed in color, they should note the predominant color. As with the hairs, so with the other body parts ― disciples should grasp the sign of each of the first five body parts, ending with the skin: (1) hairs of the head (*kesā*); (2) hairs of the body (*lomā*); (3) nails (*nakhā*); (4) teeth (*dantā*); and (5) skin (*taco*).

Having thus grasped the sign, they should meditate on their loathsomeness by way of color, shape, smell, origin, and position. Meditation on the other body parts is conducted in the same manner. The sign of each of the first five is to be taken by sight, and that of the rest is to be taken by hearing or study. The sign grasped from each of the thirty-two body parts should be developed with the repetition of the words "*paṭikkūlaṁ*, *paṭikkūlaṁ*", "abomination, abomination", not too fast, not too slow, but at a moderate pace, as in the method of "attending in succession".

Absorption (Jhāna)

Later, transcending the concept of hairs, nails, and so on, disciples should survey the whole body as a combination of all those states. Then, all those states appear to them simultaneously, just as thirty-two beads of thirty-two different shades of color, strung on a single thread, appear as a whole. When they apply this attention to external objects, the bodies of other people, animals, and other moving creatures, all appear to them as just so many conglomerations of parts, not as people or animals. Thus, their mind becomes free from the notion of individuality. As they continue contemplating, in accordance with the instructions given by their teacher, the hindrances disappear, and the *jhāna* factors (*jhānanga*) arise as was said in regard to the *asubha* subjects of meditation (Chapter 14).

This absorption (*jhāna*) arises in a single part or several parts, one after the other, as disciples wish to attain, or as the sign of abomination (*paṭikkūla*) becomes manifest, for disciples may attain the *jhāna* in all its parts, one after another, if they wish. This mindfulness has five objects, in relation to the color, shape, smell, origin, and position of each part. Therefore, it is concentrated by the power of initial application (*vitakka*), which belongs to the first form, or fine material, absorption (*rūpajjhāna*), but does not attain to other states of absorption, which have no *vitakka*. Disciples who have attained to the first absorption by attending to loathsomeness may afterwards attain to other absorptions by attending to color (*vaṇṇa*). In this way, the meditation on mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati bhāvanā*) is said to lead to all stages of absorption, and, so, leads to higher knowledge and psychic powers. Developing insight on the basis of the first absorption of *kāyagatāsati*, disciples will attain to *nibbāna*.

Thus, in all respects, this subject of meditation yields great fruits as explained in the scriptures. ■

18

Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā

The scheme of the meditation known as "*ānāpānasati bhāvanā*", "mindfulness of breathing", which is described in the scriptures and elaborated upon in the Commentaries, is first and foremost in the field of mental training in Buddhism. The *Buddha* Himself, in recommending it as a complete method for attaining *nibbāna*, praises it as "the noble abode" (*ariyavihāra*), "the divine abode" (*brahmavihāra*), and "the *Tathāgata* abode" (*Tathāgatavihāra*) (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 326). In this connection, it is recorded in the Mahāsaccaka Sutta (The Greater Discourse to Saccaka[92]) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 36) that Prince Siddhattha reached and dwelt in the state of the first absorption (*jhāna*) while still in his youth[93] — an attainment which is said to have been the result of the practice of this meditation. This shows that *ānāpānasati* was the *Buddha's* first subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), and, according to the Commentary on the Bhayabherava Sutta (Fear and

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[92] Saccaka, also known as "Aggivessana", was the son of Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, also known as "Mahāvīra", who established Jainism as a religious community. Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta was a contemporary of the *Buddha*. Jains do not believe in God. They teach that divinity dwells within every soul (*ātman*), and perfect souls are venerated as the "Supreme Spirit". Liberation is attained by right belief, right knowledge, and right action. The practice of harmlessness (*ahiṁsā*) towards all living beings is particularly stressed in Jainism. Cf. Stephen Schuhmacher and Gert Werner (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion* (Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications [1989]), pp. 158—159.

[93] The reference here is to a remarkable incident that took place during Prince Siddhattha's childhood. It was an unprecedented spiritual experience which later, during His search for the truth, served as the key to His enlightenment.

To promote agriculture, King Suddhodana arranged for a plowing festival. It was, indeed, a festive occasion for all, as both nobles and commoners, decked in their best attire, participated in the ceremony. On the appointed day, the King, accompanied by his courtiers, went to the field, taking with him the young prince together with the nurses. Placing the child on a screened and canopied couch under the cool shade of a rose-apple (*jambu*) tree to be watched by the nurses, the King participated in the plowing festival. When the festival was at the height of gaiety, the nurses stole away from the prince's presence to catch a glimpse of the festivities.

In striking contrast to the mirth and merriment of the festival, it was all calm and quiet under the rose-apple tree. All the conditions conducive to quiet meditation being there, the pensive child, young in years but old in wisdom, sat cross-legged and seized the opportunity to commence that all-important practice of intense concentration on the breath — on inhalations and exhalations — which gained for Him, then and there, that one-pointedness of mind (*ekaggatā*) known as "*samādhi*", and He thus developed the first meditative absorption (*jhāna*). The child's nurses, who had abandoned their precious charge to enjoy themselves at the festival, suddenly remembering their duty, hastened to the child and were amazed to see Him sitting cross-legged plunged deep in meditation. When the King heard of it, he hurried to the spot and, seeing the child in meditation position, saluted Him, saying: "This, dear child, is my second obeisance."

Dread) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 4), this is the practice which He used under the *bodhi*-tree as the path to His supreme enlightenment.

Both the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Yogāvacara's Manual* describe *ānāpānasati* as "*mūla-kammaṭṭhāna*", "the chief, or original, subject of *jhāna* meditation", for it proved itself to be the greatest help, not only to the Buddha Gotama, but also to all the *Buddhas* who preceded Him, in the winning of supreme enlightenment and in securing happiness for them in their lifetime. *Ānāpānasati* may, therefore, be regarded as the original subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*).

Unlike other subjects of meditation, *ānāpānasati* comprises both the *samādhi* and *vipassanā* methods. In the *Nikāyas*, it is listed under four different categories: (1) among the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta (The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 22 [II, 290]) and the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (The Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 10 [I, 59]); (2) among the ten perceptions (*saññā*) in the Girimānanda Sutta (*Anguttara Nikāya* V, 109); (3) as *ānāpānasati* itself in the Ānāpānasati Sutta (Mindfulness of Breathing) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 118 [III, 79]); and (4) as *ānāpānasati samādhi* in the Ānāpāna Saṁyutta (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 317). It usually contains sixteen steps, except in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, which lists only the first four, forming part of *kāyānupassanā*, "contemplation of the physical body". It is listed in tenth place among the *saññā* meditations, where it appears under its own name of "*ānāpānasati*", "mindfulness of breathing". The Ānāpānasati Sutta discusses the sixteen steps in mindfulness of breathing and the relation of this meditation to the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) and the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*). Combined, they form a complete system of training that will lead to *nibbāna*. The discourse in which it is cited under the name "*ānāpānasati samādhi*" also occurs in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* (*Vinaya* III, 70). Hence, from a very early stage in the development of the *Buddha's* teaching, this practice has been expounded under this name as an essential part of a disciple's training. But, it is not elaborated upon in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* as a separate scheme,[94] although it is capable of including all five absorption factors of the *rūpajjhāna* consciousness, as are the ten *kasiṇas*.

Ānāpānasati is included in the system of *samādhi* meditation as a subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) which may be used in two ways:

1. First, it is practiced in combination with other exercises as an indispensable means of obtaining calmness of body and mind.

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[94] According to the Commentary (*Atthasālinī*, p. 200) on the *Dhammasanganī*, the reason for this omission is that, among the eight *kasiṇas* given there, the air *kasiṇa* (*vāyo-kasiṇa*) includes *ānāpānasati* owing to their similarity of object. On the other hand, the *Abhidhamma*, being the special training meant for intellectuals, does not give all the details of things that are similar, but leaves them to be understood in the light of the *suttanta* teachings. For this purpose, the *Nettippakaraṇa* gives an inductive method called "*lakkhaṇa-hāra*", a method of general inference from particular instances that fall into the same category because of their similarity.

One of the most important assets for those who wish to undertake a meditation practice is the possession of a pure and healthy body combined with clarity of mind, for, in the absence of bodily purity and mental tranquility, the practice of meditation may meet with no success and may even prove dangerous. The slightest physical indisposition may impede the mind in its effort to attain concentration, as was demonstrated to the Elder Godhika (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* I, 20; and Commentary I, 183). When the mind is not at rest and is scattered by unwholesome thoughts, meditation cannot succeed, as happened to the Elder Meghiya, who was unable to concentrate his mind owing to the persistent intrusion of unwholesome thoughts, especially thoughts of lust, malice, and injury. Thereupon, Meghiya was told by the *Buddha* that five factors should be cultivated by one with an undeveloped mind: (1) good friendship; (2) morality; (3) profitable conversation; (4) determination; and (5) insight. The *Buddha* further advised Meghiya to practice *ānāpānasati* for the elimination of his unwholesome thoughts (*Khuddaka Nikāya*, *Udāna*, Meghiya Vagga). The practice of *ānāpānasati*, conducted along the lines given in the scriptures, not only tends to subdue the difficulties associated with the mind and body, but also regulates the physical body so that it can be used whenever desired as the complex instrument of the higher consciousness.

2. Second, of the forty subjects of meditation, *ānāpānasati* is the only one suitable for those of an imaginative turn of mind, or for those whose minds are continually disturbed by sensory emotions. This is the method that has been selected as a special path for such individuals. Its suitability lies in the fact that it stands in direct opposition to such characteristics. There is, however, no method of meditation that does not lead to mental purity and happiness.

Ānāpānasati is frequently discussed in the *Sutta Piṭaka*, and the points concerning it are usually given in the same order. But, in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*,[95] it is explained in great detail under the name of "*ānāpānasati-samādhi*" and receives special treatment, which makes this the longest exposition of the subject in Pāḷi literature. It opens with: "To him who practices *ānāpānasati-samādhi*, which consists of sixteen bases or divisions (*solasa-vatthuka*), there arise two hundred kinds of wisdom and more." These are explained and grouped under eleven headings:

1. Eight types of knowledge for overcoming difficulties;
2. Eight of that which is favorable;
3. Eighteen of the impurities;
4. Thirteen of the purifications;

[95] The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (Book on Analytical Knowledge) is one of the books of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* is a detailed analysis of concepts and practices already mentioned in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* and the *Dīgha*, *Saṁyutta*, and *Anguttara Nikāyas*. It is divided into three sections: (1) *Mahā Vagga*, (2) *Yuganaddha Vagga*, and (3) *Paññā Vagga*, each *vagga* containing ten topics (*kathā*).

5. Thirty-two of mindfulness;
6. Twenty-four of concentration;
7. Seventy-two of insight;
8. Eight of detachment;
9. Eight of harmonizing;
10. Eight of tranquility; and
11. Eleven of the happiness of emancipation.

In all, there are two hundred twenty.

The main purpose of this exposition is to show the different kinds of knowledge that one can attain by practicing *samādhi* in such a way that it may bring penetrating insight (*nibbedha*, that is, "*ni+vedha*", "full realization, penetration"). In the *Visuddhimagga*, it is described as a subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), and several methods of practicing it are given, while the reader is referred to the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* for details.

Definition of Terms

Before we come to a discussion of the practical side of the subject as given in the texts, it will be better for the sake of clarity to introduce the technical terms and assign definite meanings to them, for there are different opinions with regard to the application of the terms "*āna*", "*apāna*", "*sati*", and "*samādhi*". Basically, "*ānāpānasati-samādhi*" means "the concentration (*samādhi*) induced by, or based upon, the mindfulness (*sati*) that apprehends in-breathing (*āna*), or out-breathing (*apāna*), or both in-breathing and out-breathing (*ānāpāna*)."

Here, "*āna*" and "*apāna*" are two separate objects of mindfulness, which correspond to *assāsa*, "breathing in", and *passāsa*, "breathing out". In this connection, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I, 172) states: *Ānan'ti-assāso, no passāso; apānan'ti-passāso, no assāso*, that is to say, "*āna* is *assāsa*, separate from *passāsa*; *apāna* is *passāsa*, separate from *assāsa*."

In the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* Commentary (p. 320), "*āna*" is applied to the air that is inhaled (*abbhantaraṁ pavisana-vāto*), and "*apāna*" is applied to the air that is exhaled (*bahinikkhamana-vāto*). "*Apāna*" is defined as "*apetaṁ ānato*", that is, "*apāna*" is that which is distinct from "*āna*". The same definition, "breathing in" and "breathing out", is applied to the words "*assāsa*" and "*passāsa*", respectively (p. 322). The passage (p. 164 in the text), "The mind of him who follows the beginning, the middle, and the end of *assāsa* becomes confused inwardly (*ajjhattaṁ*); the mind that follows the same in regard to *passāsa* becomes scattered outwardly (*bhiddhā*)", makes it clear that "*assāsa*" is "breathing in" and "*passāsa*" is "breathing out".

But the Commentary on the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, to which Buddhaghosa Thera refers in the *Visuddhimagga*, gives the opposite meanings. There, "*assāsa*" is "breathing out" and "*passāsa*" is "breathing in". Referring to the other interpretation, Buddhaghosa Thera says, "But, in the *suttanta* Commentaries, it appears in reverse order (*uppatipātiyā*)."

The reason that appears to establish this interpretation is as follows: "When those who lie in the womb come out therefrom, the air from inside [the lungs] goes out first; thereupon, the air from outside, mixing with fine dust, enters within and, then, touching the palate, blows out. Thus should 'breathing out' (*assāsa*) and 'breathing in' (*passāsa*) be understood." (*Visuddhimagga* II, 272.)

The *Mahāniddesa* (I, 43; 466) mentions that "*assāsa*" and "*passāsa*" are the two principles by which the process of physical life (*jīvitindriya*) is supported. According to the *Mahāniddesa* Commentary, "*assāsa*" is "inhalation", and "*passāsa*" is "exhalation".

Of the two kinds of breath that support the physical body, inhalation, being the essential activity, may be granted priority. Thus, the word "*āna*", which is equivalent to "*pāṇa*"[96] and is derived from the root *an(a)-*, "to breathe", is to be applied to this vital function of inhalation. The breath of exhalation, being the air that is expelled from the lungs so that other fresh air may take its place and which is, therefore, devoid of its life-giving property, rightly occupies a position of secondary importance. The word "*apāna*", as distinct from "*āna*" (*apetaṁ ānato*), is to be applied to the lifeless current of the outgoing breath. Furthermore, at the time of death, the last breath is a breathing out. Hence, seeing that death follows upon life and not the other way around, it seems to be more rational to take "*assāsa*", which corresponds to the functioning of the life current of "*āna*", to mean "breathing in", and "*passāsa*", which corresponds to the lifeless current of "*apāna*", to mean "breathing out".

Hence, "*assāsa*" is best rendered as "breathing in" and "*passāsa*" as "breathing out". Confirmation of this interpretation, both in regard to the relative importance of the two words and the order in which they should be taken, as well as the meanings given to them, is to be found in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, a work attributed to Sāriputta The Great.

It should be understood that the mindfulness (*sati*) established by apprehending "*āna*", "*apāna*", or both, constitutes "*ānāpānasati*", "mindfulness of breathing". Moreover, the mindfulness established either on breathing in or on breathing out forms the *kammaṭṭhāna* in the preliminary stage, until disciples become aware of both as their meditation advances. The practice of *ānāpānasati* will lead to one-pointedness of mind (*ekaggatā*), which is designated "*ānāpānasati-samādhi*".

The Method Expounded in the Ānāpānasati Sutta

The following is the discourse (Ānāpānasati Sutta [Mindfulness of Breathing], *Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 118) that sets forth *ānāpānasati samādhi* as a subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) and gives an exposition of the method of practice and the sixteen steps of its development. Inasmuch as this discourse is the source from which the explanations given in the Commentaries are drawn, we shall give it here in its original form (as far as possible in translation):

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[96] Sanskrit *prāṇa*, "breath, respiration". In Vedic Sanskrit, "*prāṇa*" is identical with "*brahman*", as the metaphysical life-principle, and with "breath", as the physical life-principle.

"Monks, this mindfulness of breathing, which one has developed and made much of, has great fruit and great benefit. This mindfulness of breathing, which one has developed and made much of, perfects the four foundations of mindfulness. The four foundations of mindfulness, which one has developed and made much of, perfect the seven factors of enlightenment. The seven factors of enlightenment, which one has developed and made much of, perfect insight knowledge and liberation.

"And how, Monks, does this mindfulness of breathing, which one has developed and made much of, have great fruit and great benefit?

"Here, a Monk, having gone to the forest, the foot of a tree, or an empty house, sits down cross-legged, keeping his body upright and setting mindfulness at the tip of the nose. Mindfully, he breathes in; mindfully, he breathes out."

FIRST TETRAD

Step 1: *"While breathing in a long breath, one fully comprehends: I breathe in a long breath. While breathing out a long breath, one fully comprehends: I breathe out a long breath."*

Step 2: *"While breathing in a short breath, one fully comprehends: I breathe in a short breath. While breathing out a short breath, one fully comprehends: I breathe out a short breath."*

Step 3: *"One trains oneself: experiencing all aspects of the process of breathing, I shall breathe in; experiencing all aspects of the process of breathing, I shall breathe out."*

Step 4: *"One trains oneself: calming the physical element, I shall breathe in; calming the physical element, I shall breathe out."*

SECOND TETRAD

Step 5: *"One trains oneself: thoroughly experiencing rapture, I shall breathe in; thoroughly experiencing rapture, I shall breathe out."*

Step 6: *"One trains oneself: thoroughly experiencing happiness, I shall breathe in; thoroughly experiencing happiness, I shall breathe out."*

Step 7: *"One trains oneself: thoroughly experiencing how the mental elements condition the mind, I shall breathe in; thoroughly experiencing how the mental elements condition the mind, I shall breathe out."*

Step 8: *"One trains oneself: calming the mental elements, I shall breathe in; calming the mental elements, I shall breathe out."*

THIRD TETRAD

Step 9: *"One trains oneself: thoroughly experiencing the state of the mind, I shall breathe in; thoroughly experiencing the state of the mind, I shall breathe out."*

Step 10: *"One trains oneself: gladdening the mind, I shall breathe in; gladdening the mind, I shall breathe out."*

Step 11: *"One trains oneself: concentrating the mind, I shall breathe in; concentrating the mind, I shall breathe out."*

Step 12: *"One trains oneself: liberating the mind from attachment, I shall breathe in; liberating the mind from attachment, I shall breathe out."*

FOURTH TETRAD

Step 13: *"One trains oneself: constantly contemplating the impermanence of all conditioned things, I shall breathe in; constantly contemplating the impermanence of all conditioned things, I shall breathe out."*

Step 14: *"One trains oneself: constantly contemplating becoming weary of and dispassionate towards the things which the mind has desired and to which it has become attached, I shall breathe in; constantly contemplating becoming weary of and dispassionate towards the things which the mind has desired and to which it has become attached, I shall breathe out."*

Step 15: *"One trains oneself: constantly contemplating cessation, I shall breathe in; constantly contemplating cessation, I shall breathe out."*

Step 16: *"One trains oneself: constantly contemplating the throwing back of everything to where it came from, I shall breathe in; constantly contemplating the throwing back of everything to where it came from, I shall breathe out."*

"Monks, this is how this mindfulness of breathing, which one has developed and made much of, has great fruit and great benefit."

The method of practicing this meditation, as expounded in this discourse, is exclusively Buddhist — it is not found in this form in any non-Buddhist systems. There is, however, a system of breath-control known as "*prāṇāyāma*", which is the basis of

Haṭha Yoga.[97] From time immemorial, the ascetics of India have practiced a form of breath-control. The most rigorous form of this exercise, known in the Buddhist scriptures as "*appāṇaka-jhāna*", "ecstasy of not breathing", is recorded in the Mahāsaccaka Sutta (The Greater Discourse to Saccaka) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 36 [I, 243]) in connection with the "great exertion" (*mahāpadhāna*) of the *Buddha* before His enlightenment. Practicing this, He realized that it only led to physical torture, and, perceiving that it was not the path to enlightenment, He rejected it and returned to the method that He had practiced in His childhood under the shade of the rose-apple tree (*jambu*). Experience in this method showed Him that it was conducive to happiness and to the purification of the mind from the taints (*āsava*). In this connection, the following may be cited (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 317):

> *"Monks, I then used to spend most of my time in this practice of ānāpānasati samādhi, and, as I lived practicing it, neither my body nor my eyes were fatigued. As the result of it, my mind was free from the āsavas."*

Disciples who pursue this meditation according to the method prescribed will immediately experience the result. Therefore, this meditation has been described as "peaceful, sublime, sweet, and happy". These words describe the characteristics of this subject of meditation as distinct from the other physical subjects of meditation, such as the ten impurities (*asubha*) and that of the mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*). Meditation upon these latter subjects may give rise to feelings of repulsion on account of the nature of the subjects concerned, although, from the standpoint of penetration, they are most profound. Before they attain complete success, those who meditate upon these subjects may sometimes feel disgust at their own bodies and seek the wrong means to get rid of it, as in the case of the five hundred Monks from Vesālī who sought weapons with which to kill themselves. It was on that occasion that the *Buddha* delivered the discourse on *ānāpānasati samādhi* and laid down the third *pārājika* rule, directing that any Monk who killed a human being or induced another to take his own life should be expelled from the order (*Vinaya* III, 68—70; *Vinaya* Commentary [*Samantapāsādikā*] 396).

Unlike these other subjects of meditation, *ānāpānasati* is extremely peaceful, quiet, calm, and happy in its intrinsic nature. Disciples will feel continuously refreshed and serene through its practice, and will ever be contented owing to its sublime state of peace and intellectual profundity. Its practice, therefore, involves no difficulty or danger, as in the case of the Haṭha Yoga system. From the very beginning, it calms both the mind and the body — every taint (*āsava*) of mind will disappear, full knowledge of insight (*pariññā*) will be attained, and, finally, disciples will realize its ultimate result, the happiness of *nibbāna*.

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[97] Haṭha Yoga is a school of *yoga* that stresses mastery of the body as a way of attaining a state of spiritual perfection in which the mind is withdrawn from external objects. Haṭha Yoga places great importance on diet, purification processes, regulation of breathing (*prāṇāyāma*), and the adoption of specialized bodily postures, which structure a program of physical exertion.

The First Tetrad

Ānāpānasati meditation is set forth in sixteen steps, as specified in the discourse quoted above. In the Commentaries, they have been divided into four parts ("tetrads", after the Greek word "τέτρᾰ-"), each of which contains four steps. The first tetrad, which includes the preliminary course of training, consists of four exercises pertaining to the *kammaṭṭhāna* practice, which are suitable for beginners, while the other three tetrads comprise further development in the methods of *vipassanā* meditation. The main goal of the scheme being the establishment of mindfulness (*sati*), the essential preliminary to the attainment of full knowledge (*pariññā*), the four tetrads of this meditation embrace, respectively, the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*): (1) the body (*kāya*); (2) feelings (*vedanā*); (3) the state of the mind (*citta*); and (4) the contents of the mind, or mental objects (*dhamma*). Disciples who take the path of *samādhi* meditation should practice the first tetrad as their principal subject of meditation, and, having thereby attained the fourth form, or fine material, absorption (*rūpajjhāna*), they should then develop *vipassanā* meditation, together with the four higher knowledges (*paṭisambhidā*), for the attainment of Arahatship.

The Preliminary Course

In the beginning, disciples who have completed their training in moral purity and other necessary disciplines should receive this subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) from a teacher who has experience in attaining the absorption (*jhāna*) stages by the same practice. Failing this, they should learn the details from a person who is able to explain it from his or her knowledge of the scriptures. Having first thoroughly studied the subject, disciples should choose one of the three types of dwelling described in the text: (1) a forest; (2) at the foot of a tree; or (3) an empty house. Now, the mind, which has the habit of pursuing the various objects perceived through the senses, has no desire to concentrate itself on such a delicate object such as *ānāpānasati*. Rather, it constantly runs off the track like a cantankerous ox that does not want to pull a cart along a road.

A herdsman who wishes to tame an unruly calf takes it away from its mother and ties it at a distance to a strong post. Although it is restless and tries to escape, it is unable to do so and finally lies down next to the post. In like manner, those who wish to train their mind must first remove it from the field of sense objects, where it is accustomed to roam, and then introduce it to solitude. Binding it there with the rope of mindfulness (*sati*) to the post of in-breathing (*assāsa*) and out-breathing (*passāsa*), they must train it until it becomes fit for concentration. It is for this purpose that the *Buddha* recommended three special types of dwelling for this meditation. Disciples must choose the one most suited to the season and to their physical condition. Dwelling in a forest or at the foot of a tree is more favorable for this meditation, but those who have difficulty in finding a suitable forest or tree, which should be at least at a distance of five hundred bow-lengths (about half a mile) from a town or village, should undertake this meditation in a place that is cool, clean, and quiet, free from all disturbances.

Dwelling in any of these suitable places, having cut off the minor impediments and having performed all their duties, disciples should assume the posture most favorable for their meditation, as shown below (see also Chapter 12):



Figure 1: Full-lotus



Figure 2: Half-lotus



Figure 3: Quarter-lotus



Figure 4: Uncrossed



Figure 5: Proper positioning on the cushion

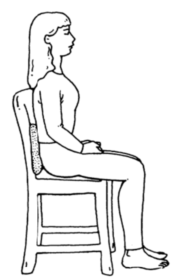


Figure 6: Proper positioning on a chair

They should sit down cross-legged, as explained in the text, keeping the upper part of the body erect and letting the body rest on the spinal column by keeping the chest, neck, and head straight. This position will ensure that the body is not bent in a way that causes undue discomfort and that the mind is not disturbed by feelings of uneasiness that may otherwise arise. Disciples may sit in any other way, such as on a chair, that will afford them greater comfort, so long as the upper part of the body is erect and resting on the spinal column as just described. They should then remove all sensory thoughts from their mind and fix their attention upon the breath, setting mindfulness at the tip of the nose and watching the breath going in and coming out as though they were standing behind it. Hence, the text:

> *"Here, a Monk, having gone to the forest, the foot of a tree, or an empty house, sits down cross-legged, keeping his body upright and setting mindfulness at the tip of the nose. Mindfully, he breathes in; mindfully, he breathes out."*

This completes the procedure of fixing the attention upon the subject of meditation and the preparation of the body and mind for the practice of *ānāpānasati*.

The Different Processes of Breathing

> **Step 1:** *"While breathing in a long breath, one fully comprehends: I breathe in a long breath. While breathing out a long breath, one fully comprehends: I breathe out a long breath."*
>
> **Step 2:** *"While breathing in a short breath, one fully comprehends: I breathe in a short breath. While breathing out a short breath, one fully comprehends: I breathe out a short breath."*

This is the actual beginning of the practice of mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpāna-sati*). It recognizes and distinguishes between the two activities involved in breathing, the comprehension of which makes the disciple mindful.

According to the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I, 177), there are nine ways in which disciples, breathing in and out long breaths, know that they are doing so:

1. They breathe in a long breath;
2. They breathe out a long breath;
3. They breathe in and out long breaths, each of which should occupy a given time. In so doing, they feel that their breathing is gradually becoming tranquil and peaceful. Thereupon, the desire to continue arises.

4. With this desire, they breathe in a long breath;
5. With this desire, they breathe out a long breath;
6. With this desire, they breathe in and out long breaths, but more tranquil than before. Thereupon, they become joyful.

7. With the mind full of joy, they breathe in a long breath;
8. With the mind full of joy, they breathe out a long breath;
9. With the mind full of joy, they breathe in and out long breaths, which are absolutely tranquil and peaceful. Here, the mind becomes diverted from the notion of long breath and is established in equanimity (*upekkhā*).

In this stage, the breathing has become very subtle. As a result, the mind attains to the after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) and is, thus, diverted from the original breathing. The long breath arising in these nine ways is termed "*kāya*", "the physical body". The mindfulness based upon the comprehension of it is termed "*sati*". The contemplation of its characteristics, such as transitoriness (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and selflessness (*anattā*), is knowledge (*paññā*). To those who attain this knowledge in any of these nine ways comes the fulfillment of the *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation as regards the mindfulness of the physical body, wherein *ānāpānasati* is included.

The second step, that of short breathing, also encompasses the same method of the nine stages of knowledge explained above. The difference is that the breathing is more subtle than in the first step, for it implies the short breaths that take a short time in accordance with the physical condition of the meditator.

Thus, disciples, knowing the two kinds of breaths (long breaths and short breaths) in two degrees (breathing in and breathing out), knows each of them in nine ways. In this way, they establish mindfulness that leads to absorption (*jhāna*) by the path of *samādhi* and to insight (*vipassanā*) by that of *satipaṭṭhāna*. All these states are based upon the four different activities of the same physical element of air, which take place at the tip of the nose in the form of breathing in, long and short, and breathing out, long and short.

Experiencing the Breaths

> **Step 3:** *"One trains oneself: experiencing all aspects of the process of breathing, I shall breathe in; experiencing all aspects of the process of breathing, I shall breathe out."*

This step is more difficult than the previous two. Here, disciples have to do three things: (1) to note the breath as it is inhaled and exhaled; (2) to distinguish the three divisions — the beginning, the middle, and the end; and (3) to train their mind.

In the case of the movement caused by in-coming breath, the tip of the nose is the beginning of its course, the heart is the middle, and the navel is the end. With the movement of out-going breath, the navel is the beginning, the heart is the middle, and the tip of the nose is the end. Having a clear understanding of this, disciples breathe in and breathe out, while the mind is associated with the knowledge based upon the whole volume (*kāya*[98]) of respiration, all of which finds expression mentally as: "experiencing all aspects of the process of breathing, I shall breathe in; experiencing all aspects of the process of breathing, I shall breathe out." To some, the beginning of the body of the in-breath and out-breath, diffused in minute particles, becomes clear, but not the middle or the end. To others, the middle is clear, but not the beginning or the end. To yet others, the end is clear, but not the beginning or the middle. To a few, all the stages are clear — nothing is confused. Those disciples whose aim is success in this practice should be like the last named. Hence, the expression: "experiencing all aspects of the process of breathing, I shall breathe in; experiencing all aspects of the process of breathing, I shall breathe out." Therefore, they make an effort not to be confused or distressed at any point, but to develop the mind in higher training to comprehend all three divisions alike — the beginning, the middle, and the end. Hence the expression: "one trains oneself", which also means that, through the mindfulness associated with the full knowledge of breathing, they develop higher concentration and wisdom, which necessarily presuppose previous training in morality, or virtue. Thus, they complete the threefold training: (1) morality (*sīla*); (2) concentration (*samādhi*); and (3) wisdom (*paññā*).

[98] The breath is called "*kāya*", because it is part of the constituent elements of the physical body.

Calming the Breaths

Step 4: *"One trains oneself: calming the physical element, I shall breathe in; calming the physical element, I shall breathe out."*

In this exercise, disciples come to the last step of the *samādhi* method, in which they experience complete tranquility of the body[99] and thereby attain complete *samādhi*.

Assāsa, "breathing in", and *passāsa*, "breathing out", are caused by the mind, but they cannot exist without the body. Just as a smith opens and shuts the bellows, thus causing the wind to blow out from them, and both the smith and bellows are necessary to produce the wind, so, for the functioning of *assāsa* and *passāsa*, there must be both body and mind. Thus, although the breathing is set in motion by the mind, it is called "*kāya-saṁkhāra*" (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 296; *Saṁyutta Nikāya* IV, 293; *Yamaka*, 229), which means "body-complex", or "physical element". When the body and the mind are distressed or are uncontrolled, this *kāya-saṁkhāra* is gross and deep. It becomes so rapid and labored that the nostrils are not enough to deal with it without the aid of the mouth. But, when they are controlled, calm, and quiet, the breathing becomes calm and fine, so that one may perceive its functioning. When people run fast, carry a heavy load, or make some other such physical effort, their breathing becomes heavy, but, when they take rest, sitting in the shade, drink water, or bathe themselves, then, their breathing becomes more gentle, fine, and calm. In like manner, through the practice of meditation, one's previously restless body and mind become tranquilized, and the grossness of breathing gradually subsides. Then, in the first stage, it assumes a rhythm that induces physical repose as well as the calm and smooth functioning of the mind. Therefore, disciples control their breath in such a manner as not to fill the cavity of the nose with a deep and thick volume of air, but breathe in and out with a view to restraining the violence and magnitude of the breath, and, thus, make the effort to maintain rhythmical breathing until they attain the *jhāna* state.

Since the breathing process is actuated by the mind, its manner of functioning will depend upon the state of the mind at any given time, being agitated when the mind is disturbed and gentle when the mind is calm. When the mind attains to the absorption (*jhāna*) stages in their due order, the breathing becomes more subtle in each succeeding stage. In the fourth *jhāna*, it is exceedingly calm and then ceases to function. Thus, we read in the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (IV, 293): "When one attains to the fourth *jhāna*, the physical element (*kāya-saṁkhāra*) of in-breathing (*assāsa*) and out-breathing (*passāsa*) becomes extinguished."[100]

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[99] The complete tranquility of the body induces happiness. The minds of those who are happy are able to attain complete concentration.

[100] There are eight states in which there is no breathing: (1) within the mother's womb; (2) when one has drowned in water; (3) in unconscious beings; (4) in the dead; (5) in the fourth *jhāna*; (6) in the unconscious form world; (7) in the formless world; and (8) in *nirodha-samāpatti*, the attainment of "the cessation of all feelings and perceptions". (*Visuddhimagga* 283.)

Thus, the gross physical element of breathing that existed before one began the practice of meditation gradually subsides from the stage of access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) to that of the first *jhāna* and completely subsides in the fourth *jhāna*, as each of the stages is attained through the method of *samādhi* meditation.

In the case of the *vipassanā* method, the physical element of breath that arises before the subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) is apprehended is gross and heavy. During the process of the development of insight (*vipassanā*), it becomes calmer and more subtle. When the mind attains full knowledge (*pariññā*) and comprehends the three characteristics of phenomenal existence — impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and selflessness (*anattā*) —, then, at that moment, the breathing assumes its final state of tranquility, and the mind attains full concentration upon the subject of *ānāpānasati*.

Thus, in these two stages, the physical element of respiration is said to be completely tranquilized. It is with a view to attaining this state that one practices mindfulness of breathing in and breathing out. Hence, the formula: "One trains oneself: calming the physical element, I shall breathe in; calming the physical element, I shall breathe out."

To this extent, the explanation of the first four steps of *ānāpānasati* meditation is based upon the text of the Ānāpānasati Sutta and its Commentary.

Methods Found in the Commentaries

There are several external methods connected with this fourfold practice of *ānāpānasati kammaṭṭhāna* that have been adopted as a special means for the preliminary fixing of attention onto the subject of this meditation. In the *Visuddhimagga* (VIII, 189—225), they are explained in the following order:

1. Counting the breaths (*gananā*);
2. Following the process of breathing with mindfulness (*anubandhanā*);
3. Noting the point of contact of the breaths (*phusanā*);
4. Applying the mind to the sign (*ṭhapanā*);
5. Contemplating the characteristic marks (*sallakkhanā*);

6. Transition of the mind from the lower consciousness to the higher;
7. Purification, or experiencing the fruit (*pārisuddhi*);
8. Reflecting on the attainments (*patissanā*).

Herein, counting is just counting, following the process with mindfulness is carrying on, contact is the place touched by the breaths, applying the mind to the sign is absorption, contemplating the characteristic marks is insight, transition of the mind from the lower consciousness to the higher is the path, purification is fruition, and reflecting on the attainments is reviewing.

The first five of these are the means adopted to establish mindfulness upon the subject of respiration, while the last three are the stages that mark the results.

Counting the Breaths

Counting the breaths[101] can be a great help for beginners who are not accustomed to concentrating the mind on a single point. The breaths to be counted must be full and normal. Before beginning to count, it will be well to draw a few deep breaths, first by inhaling and filling the body as far as the diaphragm, then exhaling slowly and emptying the body of the air drawn in. Repetition of this for a while will induce physical repose and awaken the mind to smooth functioning. Then, starting from either inhalation or exhalation, meditators should first count the breaths from one to five, and then from one to ten, but should not stop short of five nor go beyond ten. Neither should they make any break in the process of counting. For, should they stop at less than five, the mind, arising in a confined space or a period of short duration, would be restless, like a herd of cattle shut in a small cow-pen. On the other hand, should they go past ten, the mind would dwell on the number instead of the breath. When counting, the focus should remain fixed on the breath and not the numbers. If the process of counting is broken, that is to say, if the meditators lose count, either because the sequence is forgotten or because they stop counting, the mind will become confused, not knowing whether or not the counting has reached completion. Therefore, they should avoid these pitfalls in their counting. They should count slowly and diligently.

For example, meditators, taking inhalation as their starting point, should begin counting slowly and diligently, silently repeating the number "one" as the breath passes by the nostrils on entering the body, noting the point of contact while counting. They should then repeat "one" as the breath is expelled from the body, again noting the point of contact. On the next in-breath and out-breath, they should count "two", "two", respectively, and so on until five (or ten) breaths have been counted in succession. They should not go beyond five (or ten) but should then begin anew with "one", "one", noting the breaths in succession as before. As they count thus, the incoming breaths and out-going breaths become clear and distinct to their mind. If the count is lost, they should simply begin again at "one" and not try to remember the last number repeated before the count was lost.

Then, meditators should abandon the slow process of counting and begin counting quickly as "one", "two", "three", … "ten", instead of "one", "one", "two", "two", etc. The breaths that previously became evident by the slow way of counting now move quickly and repeatedly. Noting the swift motion of the breaths, meditators should neither try to retain them in their body nor expel them, but should simply note them as they pass by the tip of the nose, counting quickly, "one", "two", "three", … "ten".

When the subject of meditation is associated with this process of counting, the counting itself enables the mind to become collected and wholly applied to the subject,

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[101] This is probably the origin of the use of a *māla*, which is generally used by meditators of every school of Buddhism. In the Pāḷi literature, the use of a *māla* is not mentioned in connection with forms of meditation other than *ānāpānasati*. Present day Buddhists typically use a *māla* containing 108 beads for keeping count while repeating a meditation formula.

just as a boat in a violent current is kept on its course by means of the rudder. In this process of counting quickly, the subject seems like a continuous current of air present at the tip of the nose. Noting its uninterrupted continuity, meditators should count quickly as before, paying no attention to the air, either inside or outside the body. For, when they let the mind enter with the in-going breath, it becomes confused, being stuck within by the air. When they allow their mind to go out in the company of the out-going breath, it becomes scattered with a variety of thoughts. It is only through the development of mindfulness, fixed at the point where the breaths make contact, that meditators attain success in this practice. Therefore, until their mindfulness is established on the object of in-breathing and out-breathing (*assāsa-passāsa*) without the aid of counting, meditators should continue to count. Counting only serves the purpose of controlling the thoughts that pursue external objects and, thus, of establishing mindfulness on the breathing as the mental object of meditation.

Following the Process with Mindfulness

In this exercise, meditators should abandon counting the breaths and, instead, follow the process of breathing with mindfulness. In so doing, they should pay attention neither to the beginning, nor to the middle, nor to the end of the breaths. For, as stated in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (165): "The mind of those who follow with attention the beginning, middle, and end of inhaled breath becomes scattered within their body. The mind of those who follow with attention the beginning, middle, and end of the exhaled breath becomes disturbed outside." Therefore, in directing the attention to follow the breath, they should note the place, namely, the tip of the nose, where the breaths make contact in going in and coming out. In the method of counting, they have already noted the point of contact.

Here, disciples try to follow the breathing not with the help of counting, but with mindfulness alone, noting only the contact of the breaths and placing the mind, as it were, to watch at the tip of the nose. Just as a door-keeper notes only those who come to the door, so, the mind kept thus at the door of the breaths notes them only by their touch as they pass in and out, paying no attention to their stages, whether beginning, middle, or end, for they are of no concern in this exercise. There is an illustration of this in the simile of the saw in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I, 170). Just a man sawing timber is mindful only of those teeth which come into direct contact with the timber, but pays no attention to the other teeth which pass through the timber as he saws it, nor yet is he unaware of them, so, meditators sit down with mindfulness fixed at the tip of the nose or upon the upper lip as the outward sign of the breath and pay no attention to the breaths which come and go, for they are already known to them in the previous stage. Thus, following the breaths with mindfulness, meditators are aware of their existence by feeling their contact at the tip of the nose or the upper lip, which is the base of their attention. The breaths of a person who have a long nose strike the tip of the nose, while those who have a short nose strike the upper lip. Hence, meditators should fix upon the sign with

the thought: "This is the place that the breaths touch." This is what is meant in the text by the words "setting mindfulness at the tip of the nose".

Noting the Point of Contact and Applying the Mind to the Sign

The next two items, (3) noting the point of contact (*phusanā*) and (4) applying the mind to the sign (*ṭhapanā*), are involved in the exercise of following the process of breathing as explained above, and, therefore, they are not treated as separate exercises. Here, the instruction "applying the mind to the sign" (*ṭhapanā*) is to be understood as the application of the mind to the object of mindfulness, that is, the sign of breathing, from which the after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) arises.

After-Image Visualized in Various Forms

Thus, when disciples attend to this subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) in these four ways (in-breathing, out-breathing, long and short), after a short time, the after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) appears, and, then, attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*), here called "*ṭhapanā*", is attained together with the *jhāna* factors (*jhānanga*). For some, the gross process of breathing gradually subsides in the course of counting, and, thereby, the body and mind become tranquilized. At that moment, the body becomes light, as though it could rise up into the sky. From the time when the gross breathings have become calm, an increasingly concentrated mind arises and takes the sign of the ever more subtle breathings as its object. Unlike the other subjects of meditation, which become keener and keener as they develop, this subject of *ānāpānasati* acquires greater subtlety as it develops. It may even become imperceptible, and disciples may feel that they have ceased breathing altogether. When it becomes imperceptible, disciples should not move from their seat, wondering: "Is the *kammaṭṭhāna* lost for me?" or "Shall I ask the teacher?" For, when they get up and, thus, change their posture, the *kammaṭṭhāna* is lost, and they have to start over from the beginning. They should, therefore, remain in the same seat and induce the *kammaṭṭhāna* again by fixing attention upon the original points of the sign of breathing. By considering with close attention (*sampajañña*, or *sati-sampajañña*), disciples are aware of the existence of breaths as they touch the tip of the nose. Thus, they regain the after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) of respiration that exists in the finest state. Mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) is the most subtle and most difficult subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) and is not suitable for those whose powers of memory and concentration are poor. As the scriptures tell us (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 337): "Monks, I do not recommend the development of mindfulness of breathing for those who are forgetful and lacking in comprehension." Therefore, it requires complete mindfulness (*sati*) and quick understanding. Disciples should always keep their focus at the point that comes into contact (*phusanā*) with the breaths.

As they thus practice, in a short time, the mental image (*nimitta*) appears. Its manner of appearance varies according to the type of mentality of the disciple. To some, it appears with a soft touch, like a piece of cotton or a cooling breeze. To others, it

appears like a star, a point of light, a round ruby, or a pearl. To still others, it seems like the harsh contact of a pointed stick. Others feel it as a long string, or a wreath of white flowers, or a crest of smoke. To others, it is like a cobweb, a cloud, a lotus flower, a wheel, or a disk of the sun or the moon.

According to the *Yogāvacara's Manual*, the sign of the mental image (*nimitta*) of this *kammaṭṭhāna* appears as ruffled water with the blemishes of foam and bubbles in the waves, or else it appears like a volume of smoke rising and falling in billows, or like white clouds in the sky. The after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) appears as a jeweled fan or crystal mirror suspended in the sky, or the moon arising through the clouds, or else as a flock of white cranes moving in front of dark clouds. It is a hundred times clearer and purer than the mental image. Then follow the three thought moments, *parikamma*, *upacāra*, and *appanā*. Of them, *parikamma* is like a sheaf of feathers from a peacock's tail; *upacāra* is somewhat dark or black, like a beetle; and *appanā* is like a piece of cotton-wool which has a soft touch, or a wreath of white flowers, such as jasmine or lotus. In the course of practice, disciples should closely observe these thought forms and, withdrawing them from the tip of the nose, should mentally place them in the heart and then in the navel. Afterwards, they should place them in the nostrils.

Three Different Objects

In *ānāpānasati* meditation, there are three distinct mental objects: (1) in-breaths (*assāsa*); (2) out-breaths (*passāsa*); and (3) their sign (*nimitta*). Of these, in-breaths and out-breaths are to be thoroughly studied as explained above, beginning with counting. Their *nimitta* is to be known from the stage of following the process of breathing with mindfulness (*anubandhanā*), through feeling the in-breaths and out-breaths with special attention and applying the mind to the place with which they come into contact. Until these three become clear and distinct, meditation is not fulfilled.

Though these three objects are inseparably connected with the same subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), they differ from one another according to the condition of the mind that arises with them. The mind that arises with inhalation notes that its manner of functioning is different from that of exhalation. The mind that arises with exhalation notes that its manner of functioning is different from that of inhalation. The mind that is established on the sign of both kinds of breathing notes neither breathing in nor breathing out, but the point of their contact. Thus, it is true to say that these three are not the objects of the same state of mind, though they are connected with the same subject. Until these distinctive states become clear and fully apprehended, the meditation leads neither to access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) nor to absorption (*jhāna*). It is not the in-breaths (*assāsa*) nor the out-breaths (*passāsa*) that lead to *jhāna*, but their sign (*nimitta*). Nevertheless, this *nimitta* cannot be attained unless *assāsa* and *passāsa* are thoroughly developed.

When the *nimitta* is visualized in the forms described above, disciples should inform their teacher, who will, thereupon, give them further instructions. Those who have attained the mental image in one form or another should "protect" it in the manner

described in the *kasiṇa* meditation (see Chapter 13), with special care and attention, visualizing it repeatedly. They should concentrate their whole mind on the *nimitta*, an exercise known as "applying the mind to the sign" (*ṭhapanā*), that is to say, after the appearance of the *nimitta*, they neither count, nor follow the breaths, nor note their touch, but keep their mind upon the image visualized in connection with respiration. With the increasing intensity of concentration, the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) are eliminated, the mental defilements (*kilesa*) subside, mindfulness (*sati*) is established, and the mind becomes concentrated in the state access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). From this stage, they should not reflect on the color or shape of the image, but take it as the mental representation derived from the air element of breathings. As they cultivate it, the fourth and fifth absorptions are attained in due course.

Disciples who wish to increase the same subject of meditation with a view to further attainments should make their mind capable of acquiring the knowledge of insight by contemplating the three characteristics of phenomenal existence: (1) impermanence (*anicca*); (2) suffering (*dukkha*); and (3) selflessness (*anattā*). Rising from the fourth absorption, they see the mind and body as the source of the breathings, for it is on account of the body and the mind that the breath is set in motion. Then, they distinguish between the breathings and the body as material form (*rūpa*) and thoughts (*nāma*), the immaterial. Next, they contemplate their characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness. Developing this knowledge, gaining freedom from craving (*taṇhā*) for the things that are perishing moment by moment, they attain the full knowledge that transfers them to the Noble Paths of sainthood, the fruit of which they realize in Arahatship, the final goal of their training.

This is the conclusion of the practice of concentration in mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*), beginning with counting (*gananā*) and ending in the realization of the fruit of Arahatship. Thus ends the exposition of the first four steps of *ānāpānasati bhāvanā*.

The Second Tetrad

The following discussion is concerned with the next four steps. It explains the method of developing *ānāpānasati* meditation to *vipassanā*, a method which is known as *vedanānupassanā satipaṭṭhāna*, "contemplation of feeling (*vedanā*)" and involves both *samādhi* and *vipassanā*.

The formula for the first step in the second tetrad runs as follows:

Step 5: *"One trains oneself: thoroughly experiencing rapture, I shall breathe in; thoroughly experiencing rapture, I shall breathe out."*

In this and the following exercises, there is no separate system of *kammaṭṭhāna* meditation, since they deal with the mental processes of those who have attained to the *jhāna* stages by the previous practice. Hence, the Commentary on this tetrad gives the following account of the formulas and interprets them with regard to their context.

There are two ways in which disciples experience rapture (ecstasy, zest) (*pīti*) while they attend to mindfulness of breathing. First, when they enter into the first two absorptions (*jhāna*), they experience rapture owing to the success induced by the full realization of the object. Second, rising from the first two absorptions, in which rapture is present, they contemplate the rapture associated with the absorption and realize that it is transient and impermanent. At the moment when they penetrate into its characteristics by means of insight (*vipassanā*), they experience rapture because they are in no way confused. For, in the words of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I, 187):

> *"By means of breathing in a long breath, mindfulness is established in him who realizes tranquility and one-pointedness of mind. Through that knowledge, together with that mindfulness, rapture is experienced. By breathing out a long breath, mindfulness is established in him who realizes tranquility and one-pointedness of mind. Through that knowledge, together with that mindfulness, rapture is established. By breathing in and out a long breath, mindfulness is established in him who realizes tranquility and one-pointedness of mind. Through that knowledge, together with that mindfulness, rapture is established."*

Likewise, disciples experience rapture, and are full of rapture, throughout the course of their meditation and all its stages, such as contemplating, realizing, reflecting, possessing faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, etc. Hence the text: "One trains oneself: thoroughly experiencing rapture, I shall breathe in; thoroughly experiencing rapture, I shall breathe out."

Then follows the formula:

> **Step 6:** *"One trains oneself: thoroughly experiencing happiness, I shall breathe in; thoroughly experiencing happiness, I shall breathe out."*

This exercise refers to the first three absorptions (*jhāna*), during which disciples experience the happiness (*sukha*) induced by the object of mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) and the clarity of their mental vision. The remaining details should be understood to be the same as those given above.

The next step is:

> **Step 7:** *"One trains oneself: thoroughly experiencing how the mental elements condition the mind, I shall breathe in; thoroughly experiencing how the mental elements condition the mind, I shall breathe out."*

In this exercise, disciples fully realize the mental elements (*citta-saṁkhāra*) associated with all the stages of absorption. Here, the term *citta-saṁkhāra* is applied to the two aggregates feeling (*vedanā*) and perception (*saññā*).

The final formula in this tetrad is:

> **Step 8:** *"One trains oneself: calming the mental elements, I shall breathe in; calming the mental elements, I shall breathe out."*

In this exercise, disciples train themselves in order to tranquilize and refine the mental factors of a gross and low type. These mental factors are bound up with feeling (*vedanā*) and perception (*saññā*), which are associated with rapture (*pīti*) and happiness (*sukha*). Rapture and happiness, however, are the concomitants of feelings that may bind disciples to the *jhāna* state and, thus, hinder them from further attainments. Hence, these mental factors are said to be of a gross and low nature. Therefore, disciples contemplate the transitory nature of feeling (*vedanā*) and develop insight (*vipassanā*), and so outgrow the ordinary delight experienced in absorption. Hence, the text: "One trains oneself: calming the mental elements, I shall breathe in; calming the mental elements, I shall breathe out." These four stages of mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) proceed by way of *vedanānupassanā*, "contemplation of feeling", and, therefore, belong to the second tetrad of the *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation.

The Third Tetrad

The third tetrad, which consists of the following four steps, forms the third *satipaṭṭhāna*, namely, *cittānupassanā*, "contemplation of [the state of the] mind".

> **Step 9:** *"One trains oneself: thoroughly experiencing the state of the mind, I shall breathe in; thoroughly experiencing the state of the mind, I shall breathe out."*

In this step, disciples, who have attained the four *jhāna* states, contemplate the state of the mind and its transitory nature in each *jhāna* and realize that the mind is changing from moment to moment. With this thought, they breathe in and out.

> **Step 10:** *"One trains oneself: gladdening the mind, I shall breathe in; gladdening the mind, I shall breathe out."*

In this step, disciples practice breathing in (*assāsa*) and breathing out (*passāsa*), rejoicing, pleasing, and delighting the mind. Here, the mind is gladdened in two ways: First, disciples enter into the first two *jhānas*, in which rapture (*pīti*) and happiness (*sukha*) are present. The moment they have attained to these *jhānas*, they please and rejoice the mind with this rapture and happiness. Second, rising from these *jhānas*, they contemplate the transitory nature of the rapture and happiness associated therewith. Thus, at the moment of insight, they take rapture and happiness as the objects of their thought and please and rejoice the mind. This is the practice described as: "Gladdening the mind, I shall breathe in; gladdening the mind, I shall breathe out."

Thereupon follows the next step:

Step 11: *"One trains oneself: concentrating the mind, I shall breathe in; concentrating the mind, I shall breathe out."*

In the third step of this tetrad, the mind must be well focused on the object by means of the first *jhāna*, the second *jhāna*, and so on. Entering into those *jhānas* and then rising from them, disciples contemplate the ever-changing character of the mind associated with them. On the arising of insight (*vipassanā*), there is a momentary concentration of the mind induced by the realization of the three characteristics: (1) impermanence (*anicca*); (2) suffering (*dukkha*); and (3) selflessness (*anattā*). By means of this, disciples focus the mind while they practice the breathings. This is summarized as: "One trains oneself: concentrating the mind, I shall breathe in; concentrating the mind, I shall breathe out."

The last step in this tetrad is:

Step 12: *"One trains oneself: liberating the mind from attachment, I shall breathe in; liberating the mind from attachment, I shall breathe out."*

That is to say, setting the mind free from attachment, disciples practice breathing in and out. In the first *jhāna*, the mind is released from the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*). In the second *jhāna*, the mind is released from initial application (*vitakka*) and sustained application (*vicāra*). In the third *jhāna*, the mind is released from rapture (*pīti*). Finally, in the fourth *jhāna*, the mind is released from happiness (*sukha*) and pain (*dukkha*). Entering into and then rising from those *jhānas*, disciples contemplate the mind associated with them and know it as transient and impermanent. At the moment of insight, they breathe in and they breathe out, setting the mind free from the idea of permanence by contemplating impermanence (*anicca*), from the idea of happiness by contemplating painfulness (*dukkha*), from the idea of self by contemplating selflessness (*anattā*), from the idea of delight by contemplating repulsion, from passion by contemplating detachment, from the cause of origination by contemplating cessation, and from clinging by contemplating renunciation. Hence, the formula: "One trains oneself: liberating the mind from attachment, I shall breathe in; liberating the mind from attachment, I shall breathe out."

Thus are the four steps involving the contemplation of the mind (*cittānupassanā*), which belong to the third *satipaṭṭhāna*.

The Fourth Tetrad

The fourth and last part of the practice of mindfulness of breathing meditation (*ānāpānasati bhāvanā*) contains the following four steps, which belong to the fourth *satipaṭṭhāna*, known as "*dhammānupassanā*", "contemplation of the contents of the mind", or "contemplation of mental objects".

The first step in the fourth tetrad is:

> **Step 13:** *"One trains oneself: constantly contemplating the impermanence of all conditioned things, I shall breathe in; constantly contemplating the impermanence of all conditioned things, I shall breathe out."*

This step deals with the contemplation of the impermanence (*anicca*) that is inherent in the five aggregates[102] (*khandha*), of which rising, falling, and changing are the natural characteristics. Discerning that each aggregate is impermanent by its very nature, disciples breathe in and breathe out. Thus, they train themselves.

Then follows the second step:

> **Step 14:** *"One trains oneself: constantly contemplating becoming weary of and dispassionate towards the things which the mind has desired and to which it has become attached, I shall breathe in; constantly contemplating becoming weary of and dispassionate towards the things which the mind has desired and to which it has become attached, I shall breathe out."*

In this connection, it should be recognized that there are two kinds of freedom (*virāga*) involved here: (1) the freedom that is detachment from compound phenomena, all of which are but fleeting and evanescent, and (2) *nibbāna*, the absolute, or ultimate, freedom. The former is the insight (*vipassanā*) that is a guide to the latter, and those who practice mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*), while recognizing both types of freedom, is so described: "One trains oneself: constantly contemplating becoming weary of and dispassionate towards the things which the mind has desired and to which it has become attached, I shall breathe in; constantly contemplating becoming weary of and dispassionate towards the things which the mind has desired and to which it has become attached, I shall breathe out."

Thereafter comes the third step:

> **Step 15:** *"One trains oneself: constantly contemplating cessation, I shall breathe in; constantly contemplating cessation, I shall breathe out."*

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[102] The five aggregates of existence, or the five aggregates of clinging (*upādānakkhandha*), are the five aspects in which the *Buddha* has summed up all the physical and mental phenomena of existence, which appear to ignorant worldlings (*puthujjana*) as their ego, self, or personality (*attā*). The five aggregates are: (1) form, corporeality, materiality (*rūpa*); (2) feeling (*vedanā*); (3) perception (*saññā*); (4) (predisposing) mental formations (*saṁkhāra*); and (5) consciousness (*viññāṇa*). What is called "individual existence" is, in reality, nothing other than a mere process of these mental and physical phenomena, which, since time immemorial, has been going on, and which also will still continue after death for unimaginably long periods of time. However, these five aggregates do not constitute, either singly or collectively, any self-existent real ego-entity, self, or personality, nor is there to be found any such entity apart from the aggregates. Hence, the belief in such an ego-entity, self, or personality, as real in the ultimate sense, proves to be a mere illusion. Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), pp. 98—102.

This cessation is of two kinds: (1) momentary and (2) absolute. Momentary cessation implies the gradual elimination of the taints (*āsava*) at different stages of the practice. Absolute cessation is *nibbāna*, the final goal. Realizing both of these, disciples train themselves in the practice of mindfulness of breathing.

Finally, we reach the fourth step:

> **Step 16:** *"One trains oneself: constantly contemplating the throwing back of everything to where it came from, I shall breathe in; constantly contemplating the throwing back of everything to where it came from, I shall breathe out."*

First, insight, in the course of its gradual development, causes the giving up, or abandonment (*paṭinissagga*), of mental impurities (*kilesa*) and, with them, the forces that cause the aggregates (*khandha*) to combine. Second, insight, bringing a realization of the faults of conditioned phenomena, leads the mind towards *nibbāna*, surpassing all lesser states and attachments that are, by nature, opposed to the attainment of that sublime goal. Thus, "throwing back everything to where it came from" means "abandoning," both in the sense of "giving up" and in that of "surpassing" or "going beyond". This step leads to the eradication and, therefore, to the "giving up" of the taints (*āsava*) and brings the mind to *nibbāna* and, thus, surpasses all worldly conditions. Disciples who, endowed with the knowledge of this twofold abandoning, exercise themselves in breathing in and breathing out, are those who train themselves thus: "constantly contemplating the throwing back of everything to where it came from, I shall breathe in; constantly contemplating the throwing back of everything to where it came from, I shall breathe out."

The fourth tetrad of *ānāpānasati bhāvanā* is regarded as pure insight (*vipassanā*), while the preceding three are both calm-abiding (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*). Thus, the development of *ānāpānasati samādhi* is set forth in sixteen steps, which are divided into four tetrads, each associated with one of the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) and each developed as an independent system of Buddhist meditation. This meditation by itself tends to the attainment of all that is necessary for self-enlightenment, for, according to this scheme of practice, *ānāpānasati* becomes the root from which springs the fulfillment of knowledge and liberation. This is the implication of such passages as the following (*Majjhima Nikāya* III, 82):

> *"Monks, this concentration on mindfulness of breathing fulfills the four foundations of mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna). The four foundations of mindfulness, being developed, fulfill the seven factors of enlightenment (bojjhanga). The seven factors of enlightenment, being developed, fulfill knowledge and liberation."*

Furthermore, those who have practiced this meditation are aware of the cessation of their final breaths, as it is stated (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 62 [I, 425—426]):

> *"Rāhula, when mindfulness of breathing is developed in this way, one's final in-breaths and out-breaths are known when they cease; they do not cease unknown."*

This means that, at the time of death, the last in-breaths and out-breaths are known and recognized by those who have practiced this subject of mindfulness of breathing, and they are able to realize that the end of their life-span has come. They are, therefore, able to die in any posture they wish and prepare their body, like the Monk of Cittalapabbata Vihāra in Śri Lanka, who passed away while he was walking back and forth in the cloister.

Aspirants who practice this *kammaṭṭhāna* of *ānāpānasati*, in accordance with the methods explained above, will realized manifold advantages as its immediate results and will finally attain to the happiness of *nibbāna* in the state of Arahatship, or, if they wish to defer their deliverance, in the state of Buddhahood. Therefore, the wise should always apply themselves with zeal to *ānāpānasati bhāvanā*, which brings such great results and culminates in the bliss of *nibbāna*.

Herewith ends the commentarial exposition of the discourse on mindfulness of breathing. ■

19

Upasamānussati Bhāvanā

Upasamānussati bhāvanā, "meditation on calmness", has not yet been found in the scriptures in that form except in the list of meditations given in the Jhāna Vagga of the *Anguttara Nikāya*. However, it is explained as a subject of *samādhi* meditation in the *Visuddhimagga*, where it is placed immediately after the meditation on mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati bhāvanā*). *Upasamānussati bhāvanā* is defined there as "*sabba-dukkha-upasama*", "the calming (*upasama*), or tranquilizing, of all ills (*dukkha*)". The term is applied to *nibbāna* in the sense of "the absolute peace", and *upasamānussati* implies the recollection of the various aspects of *nibbāna*. Rendered as "the recollection of calmness", in comprises a constantly arising mindfulness relating to the object of *nibbāna* and the concentration of the mind and its concomitants upon that object. The practice renders the mind calm and peaceful from the very beginning. For this reason as well, it is to be regarded as *upasamānussati bhāvanā*, or "meditation on calmness".

It is recommended as a subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) for disciples of keen intelligence, and, like the six recollections (*anussati*), it is fulfilled by those who have attained one of the four stages of sainthood, because they have actually realized the bliss of *nibbāna* in proportion to the level of their attainment. Nevertheless, it should also be practiced by anyone who desires peace and mental tranquility, because, through meditating on it, the mind becomes disposed to attain that condition. The following exposition is based upon the method described for beginners in the *Visuddhimagga*.

Those who wish to develop *upasamānussati* should meditate in seclusion upon the attributes of *nibbāna* as described in the following text (*Anguttara Nikāya* II, 34):

> *"Monks, of all compounded or uncompounded states, liberation is the best, namely, expulsion of pride, relief of thirst, uprooting of attachment, cutting off of the round of birth and death, extinction of craving, liberation, cessation, going away from worldly desire."*

Disciples should contemplate these attributes of *nibbāna* with a proper understanding of their meaning. These seemingly negative expressions, considered in their deeper sense, have positive implications, which are summarized in the expression "the calming, or tranquilizing, of all ills", that is, the absence of all that is ill and unhappy (*sabba-dukkha*) and the presence of all that is good and happy (*sabba-sukha*).

Herein, the term "*virāga*", usually rendered "dispassion", or "detachment", is not the mere absence of passion, or lust (*rāga*). Rather, it should be understood to be the "unconditional, absolute liberation from all worldly attachments". In other words, it is the state in which all individual discrimination, caused by such lower tendencies as pride, arrogance, and conceit, comes to an end, together with the sufferings which inevitably arise from it. Hence, it is called "*madanimmadana*", "the expulsion of pride".

When this state is reached, all sensual thirst is quenched, disappears, vanishes, together with the physical and mental torments which are caused by it. Hence, it is called "*pipāsavinaya*", "the relief of thirst".

Again, when this state is attained, the round of the three phases of existence is cut off once and for all. It is, therefore, called "*vaṭṭupaccheda*", "the cutting off of the round of birth and death".

When this liberation is gained, all forms of insatiate craving for sense gratification (*kāma-taṇhā*), as well as craving for existence in the world of change (*bhava-taṇhā*), come to extinction, fade out, cease to exist. It is, therefore, "*taṇhakkhaya*", "extinction of craving", "*virāga*", "liberation [from craving]", *nirodha*, "cessation [of craving]".

Finally, it is a "going away from", an "escape from" that desire which is called "*vāna*", because it ties together, knits together, binds together all forms of existence, from lower to higher, from higher to lower. Hence, it is called "*nibbāna*", or, in Sanskrit, "*nirvāṇa*". Thus, considering these expressions, disciples should contemplate *nibbāna*, in the form of *upasama*, "calmness, tranquility", while recollecting the virtue of its attributes, as explained above. They should also recollect it in its positive aspects, which are given in discourses such as the following (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* IV, 359—373):

> *"Monks, I will teach you the unconditioned (asankhata) … the truth (sacca) … the other shore (pāra) … the ageless (ajara) … the deathless (amata) … the permanent (dhuva) … the happy (siva) … the purity (visuddhi) … the island (dīpa) … the refuge (tāṇa), the shelter (lena) …"*

Disciples, knowing the meaning of these words, should meditate, repeating them both orally and mentally. According to the *Yogāvacara's Manual* (p. 65), the word "*nirodha*" should be repeated in the preliminary exercise. When disciples thus recollect *nibbāna* by virtue of its various attributes, the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) disappear. Moreover, their mind is not sullied by lust (*lobha*), nor by hatred (*dosa*), nor by delusion (*moha*), but, at that time, is upright in the recollection of *upasama*. As in the case of the other recollections (*anussati*), the first *jhāna* factors (*jhānanga*) arise in them at one and the same time. Owing to the profundity of the attributes of *upasama*, concentration does not reach the level of attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*), but, rather, culminates in access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). This state is known as "*upasamānussati*".

Those who devote themselves to *upasamānussati* meditation sleep happily and awaken happily. They are calm in the senses and calm in the mind. They are endowed with strong faith, are noble in intention, and are revered by their fellow beings. If they fail to attain *nibbāna* in the present life, they are bound for happiness in the future. ■

20

Brahmavihāra Bhāvanā

The system of the meditation known as "*brahmavihāra bhāvanā*", "meditation on the divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*)", has come to occupy a central position in the field of mental training (*bhāvanā*) in Buddhism. Its exercises include the cultivation of the four higher sentiments, namely, (1) loving-kindness (*mettā*), (2) compassion (*karuṇā*), (3) sympathetic, or altruistic, joy (*muditā*), and (4) equanimity (*upekkhā*), which form an essential preliminary practice to the whole training of the religious aspirant. From the ethical point of view, these four principles emphasize the moral foundation of every form of religious life and are considered to be indispensable to spiritual development.

In the list of the forty prescribed subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) given in the *Visuddhimagga*, these four subjects are cited under the heading of the four "divine abidings" (*brahmavihāra*). They occur immediately after the list of the ten recollections (*anussati*) and just before the four immaterial, or formless, absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*). While they are regarded as four separate subjects of meditation in the *Visuddhimagga*, in the *Dhammasangaṇī* (pp. 53—55), they are found coordinated with the absorptions (*jhāna*), the first three with the first three absorptions, and the fourth with the fourth and fifth absorptions, respectively, where they are specified as "*brahmavihāra-jhānas*". The scriptures do not emphasize them as complete exercises leading directly to *nibbāna*, like the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*), and the Noble Eightfold Path (*aṭṭhangika-magga*). Unlike the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiya*), the four divine abidings always remain mundane (*lokiya*) qualities, for they have the conditioned beings of the world (*satta-saṁkhāra*) as their basic objects. Moreover, they are the higher emotions of aspirants, which express their attitude and behavior towards the outside world rather than towards supramundane achievements. But, they are to be practiced as a supplementary exercise to the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiya*) as well as independent subjects of meditation. When developed to the stage of absorption (*jhāna*), they are called "*cetovimutti*", "boundless deliverance of mind (from mental disturbances)"[103] (*mettā-cetovimutti*, *karuṇā-cetovimutti*, *muditā-cetovimutti*, *upekkhā-cetovimutti*), each

[103] Also called "mental release". In the highest sense, *cetovimutti* signifies the fruition of Arahatship and, in particular, the concentration associated with it. It is often linked with the "deliverance through wisdom" (*paññā-vimutti*), as, for example, in the ten powers (*dasa-bala*). It is also called "unshakable deliverance of mind" (*akuppa-cetovimutti*). In a more restricted sense, *cetovimutti* is a name for the four "divine abodes" (*brahmavihāra*). Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), pp. 47—48.

signifying the intensity of concentration (*samādhi*) induced by them in the attainment (*appanā*), or *jhāna*, state. In this state, they are associated with the path to *nibbāna*, being accompanied by the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*) and the Noble Eightfold Path (*aṭṭhangika-magga*). If they are not developed with a view to acquiring higher insight, they lead only to rebirth in the *brahma*-world (*brahmaloka*).

The Buddhist doctrine of *kamma* teaches that the higher consciousness, that is, the moral consciousness of the form-world (*rūpaloka*), known as "*mahaggata-citta*", and induced by the form, or fine-material, absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*), inevitably leads to rebirth in the *brahma*-world. But, the four principles of universal loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*) form the essential virtue of the life of a *brahma*-being, and, due to their intrinsic value in the attainment of that state, meditation upon them is specified as the direct path to the *brahma*-world (*brahmaloka-gāmini-paṭipada*) (*Majjhima Nikāya* II, 207).

In the Pāḷi scriptures, the method and purpose of the fourfold exercise are prescribed in a formula of a distinctive character, under the names "*brahmavihāra*" or "*cattāro-brahmavihāra*" (*Majjhima-Nikāya* II, 76, where the actual name is found; *Dīgha Nikāya* I, 250; *Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 115; *Anguttara Nikāya* II, 130; IV, 300; etc.). They are also called "*appamaññā*" or "*catāsso-appamaññā*" (*Dīgha Nikāya* III, 223; etc.). The term "*brahmavihāra*" is variously translated as "the divine abodes", "the divine states", "the supreme conditions", or "the sublime states", while "*appamaññā*" is translated as "the immeasurables", "the infinitudes, "the boundless states", or "the illimitables".

The word "*brahma*", according to the explanation given, in this connection, by Buddhaghosa Thera, is to be understood to mean "sublime", "excellent", or "highest", in the sense of "faultless, clean, and pure". In a further explanation, he adds that these states are the "best", on the ground that they are the "proper" and "perfect" conduct of one being towards other beings. This definition is briefly expressed in the phrase: *Brahmaṁ etaṁ vihāraṁ idha māhu*, "here, it is said that this mode of living is *brahma*, 'excellent or supreme'." Thus, the term "*brahma*" is used here in the sense of "excellent", "supreme", or "best", without any reference to the divine beings of that name.

There are also other phrases, such as "*brahmappatto*", "having attained the state of *brahma*" (*Anguttara Nikāya* II, 184), and "*brahmabhūto*", "being or having become *brahma*" (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* II, 206), where the term "*brahma*" is used to mean "higher" or "supreme state".

There is also the implied meaning of "*brahma*", in the sense of beings who abide in the *brahma*-world (*brahmaloka*). The *brahma*-beings live under the influence of these pure thoughts. Hence, aspirants who have developed them live like the *brahma*-beings.

Here, the word "*vihāra*" implies a mode of spiritual, or religious, life, as in the phrases "*dibba-vihāra*", "the divine mode of living", or "*ariya-vihāra*", "the noble mode of living" (*Dīgha Nikāya* III, 220).

It is possible that the term "*brahmavihāra*" and the meditation introduced by it have a direct connection with other schools, where it has remained with only a restricted significance and a reduced practice, although this possibility is not supported by any other Indian scriptures prior to or contemporary with the Pāḷi scriptures. The cultivation

of loving-kindness (*mettā*[104]) and the other three qualities as essential parts of *yoga* is found in the *Yoga Sūtras* (I, 33) of Patañjali of a later period, where the chief aim of the practice is to benefit the devotee in the attainment of mental purity (*cittaprasādana*).

According to the Buddhist scriptures, however, this practice is held to have been current as an ascetic ideal long before the advent of Buddhism in India. The *Jātaka* Commentary states in numerous passages that the four *brahmavihāras* were practiced by the sages of old, and they were preserved throughout the long history of the Bodhisatta's career. In fact, this practice is said to have been founded by the Bodhisatta Makhādeva, who afterwards became the *Buddha*.

In the Makhādeva Sutta (King Makhādeva) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 83), the *Buddha* recounts His previous life as King Makhādeva, an ancient King of Mithilā. Due to the fact that he practiced the four *brahmavihāras*, King Makhādeva was reborn in the *brahma*-world. The *sutta* further states that it was King Makhādeva who originated this noble practice (*kalyāṇaṁ vattaṁ*), which was thereafter followed by a series of ancient kings — his descendants. Eventually, the virtuous tradition of this ancient line of kings deteriorated as a result of negligence. The *sutta* also notes that the practice of the four *brahmavihāras* leads only to rebirth in the *brahma*-world.

Had the practice of the *brahmavihāras* not deteriorated with the passing of time, it might have still been prevalent during the period of Brahminical teaching. However, the true method, according to the testimony of the Pāḷi scriptures, had almost been forgotten. In the Tevijja Sutta (The Threefold Knowledge [The Way to Brahmā]) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 13), the two Brahmins Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja, who were arguing about the right path leading to the company of Brahmā, agreed to consult the *Buddha*, since they were unable to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. At the end of a lengthy discussion, Vāseṭṭha said to the *Buddha*: "I have heard that the Venerable Gotama teaches the way to companionship with Brahmā.[105] If this be so, may the Venerable One be pleased to show us the way to that state." Thereupon, the *Buddha* explains to them the practice of the *brahmavihāras* as the right path leading to companionship with the beings of the *brahma*-world (*brahmasahavyatāya maggo*).

The point discussed here is not the highest Brahmanical theory that deals with the union with *Brahman*, which is a Vedāntic conception. There is no connection between the personal Brahmā in this discourse and the neuter *Brahman* declared to be the ultimate reality in the *Upanishads*.[106] The Brahmins in this discourse are represented as seeking to reach the *brahma*-world by means of sacrifice and other methods taught by old Vedic

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[104] Sanskrit *maitrī*, "kindness, friendliness, benevolence, goodwill".

[105] In early Hindu mythology, the supreme existence, or absolute, is personified as the creator god Brahmā and placed in a triad of divine functions: Brahmā the creator, Viṣṇu the preserver, and Śiva the destroyer.

[106] The mystically oriented and esoteric texts known as the "*Upanishads*" (traditionally and literally, "sitting near a teacher") constitute the final portion of the *Vedas*. In the *Upanishads*, Vedic ritualism and the doctrine of the interconnectedness of separate phenomena were superseded by a new emphasis on knowledge alone — primarily knowledge of the ultimate identity of all phenomena, which merely appeared to be separate. The *Upanishads* are highly valued by seekers of wisdom for their transcendent breadth and powerful freedom of thought. The beginnings of philosophy and mysticism in Indian religious history occurred during the period of the compilation of the *Upanishads*, roughly between 700 and 500 BCE.

teachers mentioned therein, such as Tittiriyā, Chandokā, etc., who had no knowledge of either Brahmā or the right path by which to reach the *brahma*-world.

From the Buddhist point of view, the inhabitants of the *brahma*-world means the higher beings born in the *rūpa*-world by virtue of meditation, and there is no conception of the neuter *Brahman*. The path to the *brahma*-world, as it is set forth in this discourse, is purely Buddhist and contains the following steps:

1. The confidence of heart that results from moral purity;
2. The way in which disciples guard the doors of their senses;
3. The way in which they are mindful and self-possessed;
4. Contentment and simplicity of life;
5. Freedom from the five hindrances;
6. The joy and peace arising as a result of their inner purity;
7. Concentration of the mind;
8. The practice of the four *brahmavihāras*, pervading the whole world with loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.

The formula of this practice runs thus:[107]

> *"Here, a Monk dwells pervading one quarter with a mind saturated with loving-kindness, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth; so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he dwells pervading the entire universe with a mind saturated with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility, and without ill will."*

Mettā-cetovimutti, thus practiced, in the state of form, or fine material, absorption (*rūpajjhāna*), is the way (*ayampi magga*) to companionship with Brahmā (*brahmāṇaṁ sahavyatāya*).

In the three other *brahmavihāras*, the aspirant likewise pervades the world with compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*). The same formula is repeated, making each one a path to companionship with Brahmā (*brahma-sahavyatāya maggo*) (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 250; *Majjhima Nikāya* II, 207; *Saṁyutta Nikāya* IV, 321).

It is this exercise that is described as the path to the *brahma*-world. Concerning this, we read that, when each "abode" (*vihāra*) is developed into the state of "boundless deliverance of mind" (*cetovimutti*), it transcends the limited state, which the Commentary explains as *kāmāvacara*, "pertaining to the sensory plane". It then attains the state of *appamāṇa*, "immeasurable", pertaining to the form-world (*rūpāvacara*).

[107] This part of the formula occurs very frequently in the discourses, and the wording is everywhere the same, except that the subject is sometimes "he", sometimes "the Monk". Occasionally, the formula is introduced as the exercise immediately following the elimination of the five hindrances (as in *Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 115) and sometimes as the usual practice after the attainment of mental purity or absorption (*jhāna*) through other forms of meditation (as in *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 38; *Anguttara Nikāya* IV, 299).

The distinctive characteristics of this exercise are indicated in the formula by the terms "*vipulena*", "abundant", "*mahaggatena*", "exalted, lofty, become great", and "*appamāṇena*", "immeasurable". It is with these three qualities that the four divine abidings (*brahmavihāra*) become infinite, and the absorption (*jhāna*) induced by them culminates in the *brahma*-state, surpassing the limited practice of the non-Buddhist schools. Thus, the Commentary says: "Like a great body of water flooding a little creek, it reaches to the *brahma*-world, the higher, transcending the sensory world (*kāmaloka*)" (*Dīgha Nikāya* Commentary, p. 406).

In the Haliddavasana Sutta (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 115), we read that, at Halidda-vasana, a township of the Koliyas, some Monks paid a visit to a monastery of "ascetics of other views" (*aññatitthiya paribbājaka*), who said to the Monks: "Friends, the Ascetic (*Samaṇa*) Gotama teaches the practice of loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*) to His disciples. We also teach the same doctrine to ours. What is the difference with regard to this doctrine and teaching between what we teach and what the Ascetic Gotama teaches?"

The Monks went to consult the *Buddha*, whose reply was:

> *"Monks, when the ascetics of other views say this, they should be questioned thus: 'But, friends, in which way should loving-kindness be cultivated? To what does it lead? Wherein is its consummation? What are its fruits and its ending?' Similarly with compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. Thus questioned, the ascetics of other views will not be able to explain themselves, and, further, they will fall into bewilderment. Why so? Because it is beyond their scope."*

The *Buddha* further said:

> *"Herein, a Monk cultivates the factor of enlightenment (bojjhanga) that is mindfulness accompanied by loving-kindness, which is based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and which tends to deliverance and nibbāna. If he fosters the desire: 'May I abide with equanimity, mindful and self-controlled', then, he will abide therein, attaining the deliverance [called] 'subha-vimokkha'. Monks, the culmination of mettā-cetovimutti is 'subha', 'the perception of the beautiful', even in things that are repugnant. Insight comes to him who has not realized a still higher deliverance (Arahatship)."*

Thus is loving-kindness (*mettā*) explained with other factors of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*), and likewise with compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*). The difference is that compassion has its consummation in the sphere of the infinity of space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*), sympathetic joy in the sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*), and equanimity in the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*).

The passage from the Haliddavasana Sutta shows that the practice, at least in part, can be traced to non-Buddhist schools. But, it explains that the Buddhist practice, though

not opposed to the other schools in outlook, nevertheless differs greatly from what they practice in method and results.

In the Buddhist system, the *brahmavihāras* lead to *nibbāna* as the ultimate goal. But, if they are not developed to that height, the immediate result is the attainment of the *brahma*-world. Thus, we read regarding loving-kindness (*Anguttara Nikāya* V, 342): "If he does not realize a higher condition (Arahatship), he will be reborn in the *brahma*-world."

The disciple who cultivates the *brahmavihāras* as far as the state of absorption (*jhāna*) lives the life of a *brahma*-being on this earth. Therefore, Buddhaghosa Thera describes them: *Brahmā ete vihārā, setthā ete vihāra*, "*Brahma*, or excellent, are these modes of living."

All four qualities of the meditation on the divine abodes (*brahmavihāra bhāvanā*) arise in an immeasurable field of consciousness that embraces the whole world. They are, therefore, called "the immeasurables" (*appamaññā*). They are also "immeasurable" in the sense that they include within their fold beings of all sorts and conditions, and, therefore, know no limit. Even if they direct their meditation towards but a single being, aspirants should develop the divine abidings without setting any limit in quality or quantity. Thus, setting no limit, they should cherish thoughts of loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*) in fullness of heart and should diffuse them as widely as possible. Taking this infinitude as the principal aspect of these mental states, they are called "*appamaññā*" in the *Abhidhamma*.

The following account of the four subjects of *brahmavihāra* is based mainly upon the exposition given by Buddhaghosa Thera in the *Visuddhimagga*.

Mettā

According to Buddhaghosa's definition, "*mettā*" literally means "friendliness" and signifies the state of a "friend" (*mittassa bhāvo-mettā*), that is, "brotherly affection", "friendly feelings", or "unconditional love", free from lustful attachment. It has the characteristic of beneficence, or the promotion of goodwill. Functioning for the good of others is its essence, or property. Its manifestation, or effect, is the filling of the heart with feelings of loving-kindness, and the removal of hatred, aversion, or ill will. The linking of others with oneself in affection is its proximate cause. The suppression of ill will is its consummation. Selfish love, or lust, is its failure, or "near enemy".

Mettā should not be understood as "love" but, rather, "friendliness", or "loving-kindness", for "love", in its ordinary sense, is equivalent to the Pāḷi word "*rāga*" and also to "*lobha*", which means "passion", or "sensuous attachment", and is inimical to *mettā*. Another word is used in the scriptures as well to express the mental state of *mettā* — that word is "*avyāpāda*", "non-malevolence, amity, right thought", or "*avyāpāda-saṁkappa*", "the intention (*saṁkappa*) towards absence of ill will (*vyāpāda*)". It corresponds to the first of the three constituent parts of *sammā-saṁkappa*, "right intention", the second principle of the Noble Eightfold Path. It is in this connection that *mettā* leads to the

entire cessation of hatred (*dosa*), or the mental state that is aggressive, confrontational, belligerent, argumentative, contentious, or pugnacious. *Mettā* is the positive expression of "*adosa*", or "non-hatred", and is the antidote to anger, ill will, hatred, animosity, or enmity, which cannot otherwise be expelled. Thus, the *Dhammapada* (verse 5) says:

> *"Returning hatred with hatred will never bring hatred to an end in this world; only by replacing hatred with love (mettā) will hatred come to an end. This is an ancient and eternal law."*

Thus, *mettā* is indispensable to purge the mind of hatred and is one of the ten perfections (*pāramitā*).[108]

Karuṇā

Karuṇā, rendered in English as "compassion", means the emotion of the heart (*anukampā*) that is conducive to the removal of the pain, or suffering, of others. It is kindness extended to others, furthering their happiness, protecting them from affliction. Its characteristic is the alleviation of pain and misery in fellow beings or the bearing of pain oneself for the sake of their happiness. Pity at the sight of the suffering of others is its essence. Its manifestation is peace and harmless thought. Refraining from injury is its expression. The sight of the helplessness of those who suffer is its proximate cause. Elimination of cruelty is its consummation. Its failure is distraction or the production of sorrow. *Karuṇā* corresponds to *avihiṁsā-saṁkappa*, "the sentiment of non-injury", as a constituent part of right intention (*sammā-saṁkappa*) of the Noble Eightfold Path, and it is one of the great qualities and attainments (*mahākaruṇāsamāpatti*) of the *Buddha*. As stated in the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (V, 8—10):

> *"And what, Monks, is right intention? It is thoughts of renunciation, free from craving; of goodwill, free from aversion; and of compassion, free from cruelty — this is called 'right intention'."*

Right intention leads to a pure and balanced state of mind, free from sensual lust, ill will, and cruelty.

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[108] The "perfections" (*pāramī*, or *pāramitā*) are ten qualities leading to Buddhahood: (1) generosity (*dāna*); (2) morality (*sīla*); (3) renunciation (*nekkhamma*); (4) wisdom (*paññā*); (5) energy (*viriya*); (6) patience, or forbearance (*khanti*); (7) truthfulness (*sacca*); (8) determination (*adhiṭṭhāna*); (9) loving-kindness (*mettā*); and (10) equanimity (*upekkhā*). These qualities were developed and brought to maturity by the future *Buddha* in His past existences, and His way of practicing them is illustrated in many of the birth stories (*jātaka*). In the *Visuddhimagga* (IX), it is said that, through developing the four divine abodes (*brahma-vihāra*), one may reach these ten perfections. Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), pp. 147—148.

Muditā

Muditā may be translated as "sympathetic joy". *Muditā* implies rejoicing at the happiness, good fortune, or prosperity of others. Feelings of joy, gladness, or delight are its characteristics. Absence of envy (*issā*) is its essence. Its manifestation is the destruction of dislike. The sight of the happiness, good fortune, or prosperity of others is its proximate cause. Its consummation is the suppression of envy, and jealousy is its failure.

Upekkhā

Upekkhā, usually rendered as "equanimity", means a balanced state of mind, through which one is able to contemplate with disinterestedness by assuming a neutral position and by keeping the mind unaffected by either attraction or repulsion and not subject to either elation or depression. It has the characteristic of impartiality and of regarding all beings equally in its essence or function. The suppression of both aversion and attachment is its manifestation. Its proximate cause is perception of the inheritance of one's *kamma*, as "I am the owner of my *kamma*, the inheritor of my *kamma*. Whether I create good or bad *kamma*, I shall be the inheritor of that *kamma*." The elimination of both aversion and partiality is its consummation. Its failure is callous and unintelligent indifference. *Brahmavihāra upekkhā* occurs in this actual form in the fourth and fifth absorptions (*jhāna*), to be attained by emerging from the third absorption, connected with loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), or sympathetic joy (*muditā*).

Those who practice any of these four divine abidings (*brahmavihāra bhāvanā*) will experience the happiness born of insight and will secure a happy existence. The purpose of these four meditations is to eliminate ill will (*vyāpāda*), cruelty (*vihiṁsā*), envy (*issā*), and lust (*rāga*), respectively. As has been said (*Anguttara Nikāya* III, 291):

> *"Friends, mettā cetovimutti is the escape from ill will, karuṇā cetovimutti is the escape from cruelty, muditā cetovimutti is the escape from envy, and upekkhā cetovimutti is the escape from lust."*

Here, we find, as shown in the list of the subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), the four divine abidings (*brahmavihāra*) linked with the term "*cetovimutti*", "boundless deliverance of mind (from mental disturbances)". When thus compounded with the term "*cetovimutti*", as *mettā-cetovimutti*, *karuṇā-cetovimutti*, *muditā-cetovimutti*, and *upekkhā-cetovimutti*, they refer to the stage of attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*), or the absorption (*jhāna*) attained by them. When not associated with *cetovimutti*, they mean

simply the mental quality that they express[109] or the level of concentration (*samādhi*) induced by them (*Sumangala Vilāsinī*,[110] p. 406). It is in the state of access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) or attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*) that they become the means of escape from ill will, cruelty, envy, and lust, as *nissaraṇa*, "absolute freedom".

In the preliminary stage of training, disciples must reflect on both those conditions that are inimical and those that are favorable to the four *brahmavihāras*. Each of the *brahmavihāras* has two enemies, one near, the other distant. The near enemy of loving-kindness (*mettā*) is sensuous love that views objects with discrimination and seeks to indulge selfish craving. It is like an enemy lurking near a person who quickly finds the way to approach him or her without being detected. Hence, *mettā* should be well guarded against the love associated with lust (*rāga*). Its distant enemy is ill will (*vyāpāda*), whose nature is like one's enemy who lies in wait in some distant place. While *mettā* is being developed, therefore, it should be constantly protected from the intrusion of ill will.

As for compassion (*karuṇā*), its near enemy is sorrow associated with worldly (*gehasita*[111]) craving, for it deals with beings in their struggle against adversity. Cruelty (*vihiṁsā*), which is by nature the opposite state, is the distant enemy of *karuṇā*. Hence, *karuṇā* should be developed with due precaution against the invasion of cruelty.

Joy (*somanassa*) of a worldly nature is the near enemy of sympathetic joy (*muditā*), for it sees that individuals, limited as they are, nevertheless enjoy happiness, good fortune, and worldly prosperity. Being opposite in nature, feelings of envy, jealousy, resentment, dislike, and hostility are its distant enemies. Hence, in developing sympathetic joy, one should guard against the intrusion of these enemies.

Equanimity (*upekkhā*), in its general sense, is twofold: (1) that which is known as "*brahmavihāra upekkhā*", "the equanimity of the divine abidings", and (2) that which is known as "*gehasita upekkhā*", "the indifference of one who is a householder". As stated in the *Majjhima Nikāya* (I, 364):

> *"The uninstructed worldling, who, seeing an object, becomes deluded because he has not overcome the limitation of his ordinary nature and does not see evil in conditioned things, to this ordinary man, there comes such indifference that he is unable to transcend the attachment to visible form. This is called 'gehasita upekkhā', and it is the absence of knowledge and of discrimination."*

Owing to the similarity, in that it does not discriminate between good and evil, this worldly indifference is the near enemy of *brahmavihāra upekkhā*. Being in opposition to *upekkhā*, both lust and aversion are its distant enemies, and, therefore, *upekkhā* should be practiced with due diligence against them.

The practice of the four divine abidings may be divided into three stages: (1) "the will to do" (*kattukamyatā chanda*) is the beginning; (2) purging of the hindrances from

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[109] That is, the mental quality of loving-kindness, or compassion, or sympathetic joy, or equanimity.

[110] The *Sumangala Vilāsinī* is the Commentary on the *Dīgha Nikāya*.

[111] "*Gehasita*" means "connected with the worldly life (*geha*)", "connected with the life of a householder (*gahaṭṭha*) or a worldling (*puthujjana*)".

the mind is the middle; and (3) and attainment (*appanā*) of the absorption state (*jhāna*) is the end.

Unlike other forms of meditation, this fourfold exercise, in each case, consists of the continual expansion of the particular sentiments involved, from the individual to the whole community, from a single being to all beings, from one quarter of the world to the others and, thence, gradually, to the whole world and all that exists in it. So, this form of meditation, based upon external objects, extends the field of its influence until the aspirant, becoming one with the whole universe, passes beyond all individual limitations. Actually, this extension takes place in the state of either access concentration or attainment concentration (that is, *jhāna*). Full details as to the method of extension will be given later.

In accordance with the causal relationship, *brahmavihāra upekkhā* does not arise until the fourth absorption (*jhāna*) has been induced by means of the other three divine abidings (*brahmavihāra*), for equanimity (*upekkhā*) is the absorption factor (*jhānanga*) of the fourth absorption, rising from the third absorption, and, as a divine abiding, it is the immediate result attained from the other three. Equanimity actually appears as a concomitant of concentration (*samādhi*) in the fourth absorption of the fourfold system and in the fifth absorption of the fivefold system. Thus, without the third absorption, which is attained by way of the first three divine abidings, the development of the fourth absorption is not possible. Therefore, beginners should not take equanimity (*upekkhā*) as their subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), inasmuch as it is intended only for those who have already attained the preceding three absorptions.

The particular meditation chosen varies according to the mental disposition of the practitioner. Of these four, loving-kindness (*mettā*) is the path of purification for those whose predominant characteristic is ill will. Compassion (*karuṇā*) is the path for those who are full of injurious, malevolent thoughts. Sympathetic joy (*muditā*) is for those who harbor feelings of envy, jealousy, resentment, dislike, and hostility, while equanimity (*upekkhā*) is for those who are lustful. It is for this reason that the order of arrangement of the four divine abidings is justified. Moreover, they are the essential antidotes to their opposite states. Again, the fourfold exercise is meant to stimulate the positive qualities of the religious aspirant, as exemplified in the sentiments of goodwill, kindness, happiness, and impartiality, into self-sacrifice for the benefit of others.

We may imagine a mother who, in her duties towards four sons — one who is an infant, one who is ailing, one who is a teenager, and one who is an adult —, desires the growth of the youngest, makes every effort for the recovery of the one who is ill, is gladdened by the good grades of the teenager, and is reassured about the adult son, who now manages his own affairs. In like manner, disciples who cultivate the immeasurables (*appamaññā*) should first practice loving-kindness, suffusing all sentient beings with good will, and should then practice compassion for those who are suffering. They should next practice sympathetic joy for those who are happy, and, thereafter, when they have reached an advanced state, they should proceed to equanimity.

Regarding the actual practice, disciples should first begin with loving-kindness and should cherish thoughts of good will for the welfare of others. They should put those

thoughts into action by doing good. Then, thinking of what they have seen or heard concerning the suffering of others, they should practice compassion by doing what they can to alleviate their suffering, for, the true characteristic of this divine abiding is not the mere thought of compassion, but the actual removal of the suffering of others. Next, having thus desired happiness for others and having removed their suffering, disciples should rejoice at their happiness, good fortune, and prosperity. Lastly, disciples should practice the preceding three divine abidings in a state of even-mindedness, or mental equanimity, for nothing else remains to be done. The characteristic of equanimity is to be perfectly balanced.

This special form of meditation induces one or the other of the absorption states, according to the psychological nature of the particular sentiments. Though they are interrelated, each having the same characteristic of embracing an immeasurable field of objects, the first three divine abidings induce the first three or four absorptions of the fourfold or fivefold systems, respectively, while the fourth divine abiding is connected with the fourth (or fifth) absorption. The first three divine abidings (*brahmavihāra*) are necessarily associated with happiness (*sukha*) and cannot be dissociated from it, because they are the means of escape from such qualities as ill will, cruelty, and envy, which are associated with melancholy, or brooding. Therefore, the first three divine abidings do not induce the fourth absorption, which surpasses the states of rapture (*pīti*) and happiness (*sukha*). Equanimity (*upekkhā*) is associated with the last absorption on the basis of its characteristic of neutral feeling, without which it does not arise at all.

The four immeasurables (*appamaññā*) are thus divided into two classes, because the threefold absorptions are associated with the first three immeasurables (that is, *mettā*, *karuṇā*, and *muditā*), forming one division, while the last absorption is associated with the last immeasurable (that is, *upekkhā*), forming the second division. They also differ from one another in that each is supreme in yielding its own special fruit, as explained in the Haliddavasana Sutta (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* V, 119):

> *"Loving-kindness (mettā) cetovimutti, I declare, Monks, is supreme (parama) in the beautiful (subha). Supreme, I declare, is the sphere of infinite space (ākāsānañcāyatana) for the cetovimutti of compassion (karuṇā). Supreme, I declare, is the sphere of infinite consciousness (viññāṇañcāyatana) for the cetovimutti of sympathetic joy (muditā). Supreme, I declare, is the sphere of nothingness (ākiñcaññāyatana) for the cetovimutti of equanimity (upekkhā)."*

The satisfaction derived from this supreme condition is thus explained by the Commentary: To those who abide in the loving-kindness of the *mettā brahmavihāra*, beings are not repulsive (even though they might be so regarded by ordinary people). Being thus accustomed to regard objects without feelings of repulsion, they easily bring their mind into concentration (*samādhi*) by practicing either the color *kasiṇas* of pure blue, yellow, red, or white, or the meditation on the impurities (*asubha bhāvanā*), as to the different types of corpses. Thus, the loving-kindness of the *mettā brahmavihāra* is

consummated in this "beautiful" (*subha*) state of mind, called "*subhavimokkha*", which is described thus: "He is intent upon the thought, 'it is good' or 'it is beautiful'."

Those who live continually cherishing thoughts of compassion for the suffering of other beings fully realize the evil of the physical body or of any material form, subject, as it is, to ill and pain. When, perceiving the evils of material phenomena, they meditate with a view to gaining release from the physical plane, their mind penetrates without difficulty into space, which brings escape from materiality. Thus *karuṇā cetovimutti* tends to the attainment of the realm of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*), but no further.

When in a state of sympathetic joy, aspirants contemplate the consciousness of beings who are in a joyful condition. Accordingly, their mind becomes experienced in comprehending this consciousness, owing to the constant practice of sympathetic joy. When they have reached and, in due course, passed beyond the sphere of infinite space, they bring their mind to the consciousness that dwelt upon the object of infinite space, and their mind enters into it, for it has left the idea of space without difficulty. Thus, *muditā cetovimutti* is the satisfying condition of the sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*), but of nothing higher. Hence, this is its supreme fruit.

But, the mind of those who are in a state of equanimity turns away from all feelings and from the apprehending of happiness or pain as a reality. The neutralization of feeling and the turning away from the conception of an individual existence leads them to apprehend the fact that, to dwell upon such things which have no substantial existence, is itself an illusion. The conception of existence, therefore, in the sense of the ultimate reality, is naught. They then bring their mind to the fact of the absence of consciousness, which is, as an ultimate truth, non-existent. Thereafter, their mind penetrates into the realm of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*) without difficulty. Thus, equanimity is the satisfying condition of the sphere of nothingness, but of nothing higher. Hence, the supreme fruit of equanimity (*upekkhā*) is the sphere of nothingness.

Thus, these four immeasurables (*appamaññā*) are distinguished by the supreme qualities of their attainments, and they are also judged to be the fulfillment of all good qualities, such as the charity, benevolence, etc. practiced in the previous stage of the religious life. The *bodhisattas*, or "Great Beings", endowed with these qualities, desire the welfare of all beings and, consequently, strive tirelessly to relieve their suffering (*dukkha*). They seek to promote the prosperity and happiness of all beings and exercise impartiality toward all. They fulfill the ideal of charity, making no difference such as "to this one, it should be given, to that one, it should not be given". They refrain from injury, practice moral precepts, and renounce the worldly life with a view to fulfilling a life of virtue. They purify their insight so that they may make no mistake in discriminating between what is good and what is not good for other beings. They are constantly persevering in their efforts to further the happiness of other beings. Though they possess the power to resist evil themselves, they tolerate the wickedness and manifold failings of others, and they do not break promises they have made to others or on their behalf, while, at the same time, they are unswerving in their determination regarding the welfare and happiness of other beings. They are foremost in extending unconditional loving-kindness (*mettā*) to all, and, dwelling, as they do, in equanimity, they expect nothing in return.

Having thus fulfilled the ten perfections (*pāramitā*), they attain Buddhahood, the highest and the best achievement. These four divine abiding (*brahmavihāra*), therefore, are seen to be productive of all good states, from the lowest to the highest.

In the next chapter, we shall deal with the actual method of practicing them. ■

21

The Methods of Brahmavihāra Bhāvanā

Canonical Methods

Though the Buddhist system of meditation (*bhāvanā*) is essentially a method of self-enlightenment, followed for the attainment of self-perfection, the practice of the four divine abidings (*brahmavihāra*) is the expression of those positive qualities and that sublime and perfect purity and tenderness of heart which gradually become manifest in religious aspirants as they proceed with their training.

Of these qualities, *mettā*, unbounded, unconditional loving-kindness, friendliness, or benevolence, in itself, emphasizes the positive nature of self-sacrifice and devoted service of aspirants, which is not confined to any one part or portion of existence, but is extended over the whole universe to include all living beings, from the highest to the lowest, and from the greatest to the most minute forms of life. *Mettā*, as exemplified in the *Buddha* and His followers and expounded in the scriptures, is not an evanescent exhibition of emotion, but a sustained and habitual mental attitude of service, good will, and friendship, which finds expression in word, thought, and deed. There are numerous passages that can be collated to testify to the vital importance attached to this "divine state" in the *Buddha's* teaching.

The exercise of loving-kindness (*mettā*), which, psychologically speaking, is a moral attribute, tends to the cultivation of the emotional sentiment of good will, rather than meditation itself. Disciples should, however, practice *mettā* in conjunction with other forms of meditation, for it is indispensible to those who seek to modify their mind from anger and malice. Moreover, they will find that it is an essential support for the practice of meditation, bringing immediate success and providing the means of protection from external hindrances with which they may have to contend.

In the Mahārāhulovāda Sutta (The Greater Discourse of Advice to Rāhula) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 62 [I, 424]), the *Buddha* advises His son, the Elder Rāhula, to practice loving-kindness meditation on the ground that, when it is cultivated, anger will disappear. In the Meghiya Sutta (*Anguttara Nikāya* IV, 354), loving-kindness meditation was recommended to the Elder Meghiya, who had failed to achieve success in meditation at first, due to the persistent arising of malevolent thoughts. Afterwards, he attained Arahatship, having expelled and excluded malevolent thoughts from his mind with the aid of the loving-kindness he had developed.

Several methods of practicing loving-kindness (*mettā*) as an independent form of meditation are expounded in the Pāḷi Canon in various connections. In the treatment of the subject, special consideration should be given to four methods, in particular.

1. Of these four, the formula of the fourfold *brahmavihāra* exercise which occurs most frequently in the discourses and which may be found in the Tevijja Sutta (The Threefold Knowledge [The Way to Brahmā]) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 13) deals mainly with the method of "*disāpharaṇa*". This consists in suffusing the whole world with thoughts of loving-kindness (*mettā*), expanded in all directions, and is associated with the absorption (*jhāna*) stages. The formula is as follows:

   "Here, a Monk dwells pervading one quarter with a mind saturated with loving-kindness, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth; so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he dwells pervading the entire universe with a mind saturated with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility, and without ill will."

   This formula is discussed by Buddhaghosa Thera in the *Visuddhimagga*, where he distinguishes it as "*vikubbanā*", a term which also occurs in connection with the psychic powers (*iddhividhā*) as "*vikubbanā-iddhi*", where it means "exercising psychic power of various forms". However, as used by Buddhaghosa, it literally means "suffusing in many ways, or forms". It implies the establishment of an immense sphere of benevolent thought, which is increased to the stage of attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*), or absorption (*jhāna*). Hence, this formula indicates the habitual mental attitude of those who have attained *jhāna* by the practice of *mettā*, and we find it repeated, with substitution, one by one, of the other altruistic emotions of compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*).

   Being the statement of the special mode of living to be adopted by religious aspirants, this formula emphatically expresses their mental attitude in relation to the external world, especially in the *jhāna* state. Furthermore, it describes the outlook of those who neither torture themselves nor inflict injury upon others, but who "live satisfied, tranquil, and cool, enjoying the happiness of serenity, themselves *brahma*-beings" (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 349; II, 159). The special context of the formula corresponds to the Upāli Sutta (To Upāli) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 56 [I, 378]), where it is stated that those who have attained *jhāna* and psychic powers (*iddhi*), but have not yet cultivated *mettā*, can destroy others by the mere disturbance of their minds through anger. But, the disciples of the *Buddha*, as the formula says, abide suffusing the entire universe with the boundless love of *mettā*, free from all anger and malice.

2. The well known Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta (Discourse on Loving-Kindness) (*Sutta Nipāta* 1:8) sets forth the manner in which loving-kindness (*mettā*) should be practiced, both as means of self-protection and as a subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*). There, it is emphasized as an essential duty of disciples who follow this system of religious

training, seeking happiness and peace. This discourse is one of the most important selected for recitation during religious services and chanting at the *paritta* ceremony, which is usually held on auspicious occasions or in the case of affliction, epidemic, or individual sickness. It has a special importance for disciples of meditation, and, therefore, it is given here in Pāḷi, together with an English translation:

1.	
Karaṇīyaṁ atthakusalena	One skilled in good, wishing to attain
yaṁ taṁ santaṁ padaṁ abhisamecca	That state of peace should act thus:
sakko ujū ca sūjū ca	He should be able, straight, upright,
suvaco c'assa mudu anatimāni.	Obedient, gentle, and humble.
2.	
Santussako ca subharo ca	He should be content, easy to support,
appakicco ca sallahuka-vutti	With few duties, living lightly,
santindriyo ca nipako ca	Controlled in senses, discreet,
appagabbho kulesu ananugiddho.	Not impudent, unattached to families.
3.	
Na ca khuddaṁ samācare kiñci	He should not do any slight wrong
yena viññū pare upavadeyyuṁ.	For which the wise might censure him.
Sukhino vā khemino hontu!	May all beings be happy and secure!
Sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhitattā.	May all beings have happy minds!
4.	
Ye keci pāṇabhūtatthi	Whatever living beings there may be
tasā vā thāvarā vā anavasesā	Without exception, weak or strong,
dīghā vā ye mahantā vā	Long, large, middling,
majjhimā rassakānuka-thūlā	Short, subtle, or gross,
5.	
Diṭṭhā vā yeva adiṭṭhā	Visible or invisible,
ye ca dūre vasanti avidūre	Living near or far,
bhūtā vā sambhavesī vā	Born or coming to birth —
sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhitattā.	May all beings have happy minds!
6.	
Na paro paraṁ nikubbetha	Let no one deceive another
nātimaññetha katthacinaṁ kañci	Nor despise anyone anywhere.
Byārosanā paṭighasaññā	Neither in anger nor ill will
nāññaṁ aññassa dukkhaṁ iccheyya.	Should anyone wish harm to another.

7.

Mātā yathā niyaṁ puttaṁ	As a mother would risk her own life
āyusā ekaputtaṁ anurakkhe	To protect her only child,
evampi sabbabhūtesu	Even so towards all living beings
Mānasaṁ bhāvaye aparimānaṁ	One should cultivate a boundless heart.

8.

Mettañ ca sabba-lokasmiṁ	One should cultivate for all the world
mānassaṁ bhāvaye aparimānaṁ	A heart of boundless loving-kindness,
Uddhaṁ adho ca tiriyañ ca	Above, below, and across,
Asambādhaṁ averaṁ asapattaṁ.	Unobstructed, without hate or enmity.

9.

Tiṭṭhañ caraṁ nisinno vā	Whether standing, walking, or sitting,
sayāno vā yāvat'assa vigatamiddho	Lying down or whenever awake,
etaṁ satiṁ adhiṭṭheyya	He should develop this mindfulness;
brahmaṁ etaṁ vihāraṁ idha māhu.	This is called divinely dwelling here.

10.

Diṭṭhiñ ca anupagamma sīlavā	Not falling into erroneous views,
dassanena sampanno	But virtuous and endowed with vision,
kāmesu vineyya gedhaṁ	Removing desire for sensory pleasures,
na hi jātu gabbhaseyyaṁ punar eti'ti.	He comes never again to birth in the womb.

In the *Yogāvacara's Manual* (p. 3), we read that the Mettā Sutta is to be recited in its Pāḷi form as part of the invocation that should precede all exercises in meditation. The text of this discourse is supposed to be so arranged that the words themselves have a certain sonorous power, to which importance is attached, and it is always chanted with a special intonation. But, the main purpose of this discourse is to expound the practice of loving-kindness and to formulate a definite system of contemplative exercise. Moreover, it is a more special expansion of the method of suffusing loving-kindness and corresponds to that given in the formula in the Tevijja Sutta. Furthermore, it is in this discourse that *mettā* is compared with a mother's love and named specifically as one of the divine abidings (*brahmavihāra*). The practice of this meditation alone leads to emancipation from rebirth, as emphasized in the saying, "He comes never again to birth in the womb".

3. The other special application of loving-kindness (*mettā*) is found in the Khandha Paritta (*Anguttara Nikāya* II, 72), where it is given as a safeguard against harm by snakes. This *paritta*[112] states that a certain Monk of Sāvatthī had died as a result of

[112] A *paritta* is a "protective discourse". The practice of reciting or listening to *paritta* discourses began very early in the history of Buddhism. In the Pāḷi literature, these short verses are recommended by the *Buddha* as providing protection from certain afflictions. The belief in the effective power to heal, or

receiving a snake-bite. A number of Monks brought the news to the *Buddha*, who is reported to have said:

> *"The Monk had not practiced mettā towards the four families of snakes. There are four families (kula) of snakes, namely, virūpakkha, erāpatha, chabyāputta, and kaṇhāgotamaka. Had he practiced mettā towards these four kinds of snakes, he would not have died from a snake-bite. I advise you, Monks, to suffuse them with thoughts of loving-kindness for your own safety and protection."*

The actual method of suffusing loving-kindness (*mettā*) is given here in verses and is extended gradually, proceeding from the four families of snakes, thus:

> *"May loving-kindness be extended to the virāpakkhas;*
> *May loving-kindness be extended to the erāpathas;*
> *May loving-kindness be extended to the chabyāputtas;*
> *May loving-kindness be extended to the kaṇhāgotamakas."*

The suffusing is then gradually extended, advancing in definite stages and including different kinds of creatures — the footless, those that have two feet, the quadrupeds, and those with many feet.

Thereafter, the disciple's aspiration continues thus:

> *"Let not the footless do me harm,*
> *Nor those with two feet;*
> *Let not the quadrupeds do me harm,*
> *Nor those with many feet."*

The disciple then continues, developing immeasurable suffusion:

> *"May all beings, all living things,*
> *All that are born, and everyone,*
> *May all of them be happy,*
> *And may no harm come to them."*

The verse contains some of the actual words that occur in the formulas for meditation, as given in later works.

Next comes the invocation:

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protect, of the *saccakiriya*, or asseveration of something quite true, is an aspect of the work ascribed to the *paritta*. It is also widely believed that all-night recitations of *paritta* discourses by monks bring safety, peace, and well-being to a community. Such recitations also occur on auspicious occasions, such as the inauguration of a new temple or home or to bestow blessings on those who hear them recited. Conversely, *paritta* discourses are recited on inauspicious occasions as well, such as at a funeral or on the anniversary of the death of a love one.

> *"Infinite is the virtue of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha; finite are creeping things, such as snakes, scorpions, centipedes, spiders, house lizards, and mice. I have fulfilled my responsibility; [I have given them] my protection. Let all creatures turn away in peace. Reverence to the Lord, reverence to the seven fully enlightened ones."*

This discourse has a very long and firmly established tradition. It occurs in the *Khandha-Vatta Jātaka* (*Jātaka* 145, vol. II), where the *Bodhisatta* advised His followers to observe this *paritta* (which is given in the same form) as a protection against serpents, for they were living in a place in a Himalayan valley where such creatures were abundant. Observing this advice, the ascetics are said to have lived unharmed for a long time, during the period of the *Bodhisatta* Himself, who was practicing the divine abidings (*brahmavihāra*) and was, consequently, bound to the *brahma*-world. In relating this story of His past experience, the *Buddha* advised the Monks to observe the same *paritta*.

This meditational exercise is given in the Khuddaka-Vatta-Khandhaka of the Cullavagga (*Vinaya* 109) as a rule of discipline and duty, and the special name "*khandha paritta*" is probably adopted from this connection.

Of these two *parittas*, the method expounded in the Mettā Sutta corresponds to the practice as followed in the absorption (*jhāna*) stage, as does also the formula found in the Tevijja Sutta, while the other seems to be a more primitive form of suffusion. Both, however, contain the "*anodhiso*", the "unlimited", and the "*odhiso*", the "limited" forms of suffusion, which are explained in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, as will be seen below. Both methods, the unlimited and the limited, combine with that of *disāpharaṇa*, suffusing through all the directions or quarters given in the formula of the fourfold exercise. They may differ in the letter, but the spirit is everywhere the same.

4. A more widely extended suffusion of loving-kindness, which corresponds to these formulas, is mentioned in the Mettā Kathā of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (vol. II, pp. 129—139), where a detailed description of several methods, arranged in numerical order, is given. They are combined individually with the following principles of the requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiya*): (1) the five spiritual faculties (*indriya*); (2) the five powers (*bala*); (3) the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*); and (4) the Noble Eightfold Path (*aṭṭhangika-magga*). First, the Mettānisaṁsa Sutta is quoted, a discourse that occurs in the *Anguttara Nikāya* (V, 342) and sets forth eleven advantages of meditation on loving-kindness (*mettā bhāvanā*), which will be explored later. Then, the following methods of suffusing loving-kindness are enumerated:

   1. Suffusing without a limit (*anodhiso pharaṇā*);
   2. Suffusing with a limit (*odhiso pharaṇā*);
   3. Suffusing through the directions, or quarters (*disāpharaṇā*).

The *anodhiso*[113] method is subdivided into five groups, each of which forms a separate meditation formula. They are: (1) all beings (*sabbe sattā*); (2) all living things (*sabbe pāṇā*); (3) all creatures (*sabbe bhūtā*); (4) all persons, or individuals (*sabbe puggalā*); and (5) all that have come to individual existence (*sabbe attabhāva pariyā-pannā*).

Each of these five is linked with the four types of aspiration: (1) "may they be peaceful" (*averā hontu*); (2) "may no harm come to them" (*abyāpajjā hontu*); (3) "may they be well" (*anighā hontu*); and (4) "may they be happy" (*sukhī attānaṁ pariharantu*).

In the case of the above mentioned, the full formula should be repeated, thus: "May all beings be peaceful; may no harm come to them; may they be well; may they be happy." Likewise for the remaining groups, in succession: "May all living things, all creatures, all individuals, and all that have come into existence be peaceful; may no harm come to them; may they be well; may they be happy."

In following this method, aspirants include all beings in their thoughts of loving-kindness and pervade them with these thoughts, without any boundaries or limitations — "touching all without regard to a particular place, area, or locality", as the Commentary says. Hence, it is "*anodhiso pharaṇā*", "suffusing without a limit or boundary".

There are seven forms of *odhiso pharaṇā*, or the "limited method": (1) all females (*sabbā itthiyo*); (2) all males (*sabbe purisā*); (3) all worthy ones, or all those who have attained perfection (*sabbe ariyā*); (4) all unworthy ones, or all who are imperfect (*sabbe anariyā*); (5) all celestial beings (*sabbe devā*); (6) all human beings (*sabbe manussā*); and (7) all those in unhappy states (*sabbe vinipātikā*).

Each should be linked with the four aspirations and repeated separately or collectively during the period of meditation.

In employing this method, aspirants suffuse loving-kindness (*mettā*), while dividing beings into groups according to their nature or condition. The meditation is therefore called "*odhiso pharaṇā*", "suffusing within a limit or boundary".

There are ten modes of suffusing loving-kindness through the directions, or quarters (*disāpharaṇā*), and the intermediate directions, or quarters, starting from the East. They comprise the eight points on the compass: the four cardinal points and the four intermediate points, as well as "above" and "below".

The formulas are: "May all beings in the East be peaceful; may no harm come to them; may they be well; may they be happy." In like manner: "May all beings in the West, the North, the South, the Northeast, the Southwest, the Northwest,

[113] "*Odhiso*" means "relating to a particular portion, part, or boundary", and "*anodhiso*" means "without regard to a particular portion, part, or boundary". The Commentary on the *Anguttara Nikāya* (p. 48) uses the words in a different form, as "*odissaka*", which means "relating to a particular class or individual", and "*anodissaka*" means "without regard to a particular class or individual".

the Southeast, above and below, be peaceful; may no harm come to them; may they be well; may they be happy."

In these three methods of suffusing loving-kindness, there are twenty-two (five, seven, and ten) formulas, and each, according to the Commentary, refers to the loving-kindness (*mettā*) that leads to attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*), or absorption (*jhāna*).[114] Of the five types of *anodhiso pharaṇā*, "suffusing without a limit", "may all beings be peaceful" is one attainment (*appanā*), "may no harm come to them" is the second attainment, "may they be well" is the third attainment, and "may they be happy" is the fourth attainment. Thus, in the method of unlimited suffusing (*anodhiso pharaṇā*), there are twenty attainments, that is, four in each of the five formulas. In the same way, four attainments in each of the seven formulas of limited suffusing (*odhiso pharaṇā*) give a total of twenty-eight.

The five groups and four aspirations of the unlimited suffusing method (*anodhiso pharaṇā*) have also been combined with the ten formulas of the directions, or quarters (*disāpharaṇā*), method, thus: "May all beings in the East be peaceful", and so forth. In this way, there are two hundred attainments (*appanā*), that is, twenty in each quarter.

In like manner, the seven formulas of the limited suffusing method (*odhiso pharaṇā*) have been combined with the ten formulas of the directions, or quarters, method as: "May all women in the East be peaceful", and so on. Thus, there are two hundred eighty attainments, twenty-eight in each quarter.

Altogether, there are four hundred eighty attainments (*appanā*). Actually, five hundred twenty-eight attainments (twenty, twenty-eight, two hundred, and two hundred eighty) are mentioned in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*.

The Commentary states that the other three abodes (*vihāra*) — compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*) — are also employed with the same method of suffusing, and disciples who practice them by means of any one of these attainment states enjoy the eleven blessings spoken of in the following passage from the Mettānisaṁsa Sutta (*Anguttara Nikāya* V, 342):

> *"Monks, from the practice of mettā-cetovimutti, boundless deliverance of mind (from mental disturbances) through loving-kindness, cultivated, increased, made a vehicle (yānikatā), made a basis (vatthukatā), persisted in, made familiar, well set forth, eleven blessings are to be expected. What are the eleven? Happy he sleeps, happy he awakens; he does not have nightmares; he is dear to human beings; he is dear to non-human beings; celestial beings guard him; neither fire, nor poison, nor sword come near to him; quickly, his mind becomes concentrated; his complexion becomes clear; he dies with his mind free from confusion; if he realizes no further attainment, he goes to the brahma-world."*

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[114] This explanation is based upon the cultivation of *mettā-cetovimutti*, "boundless deliverance of mind (from mental disturbances), or absorption, through loving-kindness", given in the Mettānisaṁsa Sutta.

Commentarial Exposition

In commenting upon the scriptural teachings, Buddhaghosa Thera gives a detailed account of the *brahmavihāra* meditations in the *Visuddhimagga* and describes the method of practicing them, considering each as a separate subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*). His account consists largely of the details of the practical methods and the preliminary instructions given to beginners, which appear to be based upon the experiences of the *yogāvacara* Elders who were contemporary with him.

According to the *Visuddhimagga*, disciples who wish to begin the meditation upon loving-kindness (*mettā*) should proceed as follows:

They should first develop moral purity (*sīla*) during their early training, by taking the precepts given in the scriptures as their ethical standards and basing their conduct upon them. Having become free from the impediments, both internal and external, they should then receive the subject of loving-kindness meditation (*mettā bhāvanā*) from a teacher who is competent to instruct them. Taking a seat duly arranged in a secluded location and choosing a suitable time, they should first prepare their mind, thinking upon the evils of hatred and the advantages of forbearance. To this end, they should repeat such sayings as (*Anguttara Nikāya* I, 157):

> *"A man who is angry and whose mind is assailed by hatred may kill living things, destroy the happiness of others as well as himself, etc."*

The advantages of forbearance are to be known from sayings such as (*Dīgha Nikāya* II, 49; *Dhammapada*, verse 184):

> *"Cultivate patience and forbearance, and attain nibbāna, the highest goal of life, according to the Awakened Ones. A spiritual aspirant does not harm others; one who harms others is not a true spiritual aspirant."*

By means of this practice, the mind will be purged of hatred, and forbearance will be substituted. Disciples should then begin the practice of loving-kindness, with a view to eradicating hatred and cultivating forbearance. But, in the beginning, disciples should not, for certain psychological reasons, diffuse loving-kindness towards the following four kinds of persons:

1. One who is not dear;
2. One who is a very close friend;
3. One who is regarded with indifference;
4. One who is an enemy.

Again, it is suggested that one should not, at first, diffuse loving-kindness towards those to whom one would normally be sexually attracted, nor towards the dead.

The reasons for these restrictions are as follows: Disciples may have difficulty at the beginning in extending to an unloved one the kindness usually given to one who is dear. At the same time, *mettā bhāvanā* should be accompanied by detachment, and, in trying to remain personally detached while practicing *mettā* towards one who is very close, disciples may not only grow tired, but their detachment may be disturbed by feelings of distress should their close friend experience even the slightest pain, suffering, or sorrow. To show kindness and love to those who are regarded with indifference is difficult from the outset. Anger may arise in those who think of an enemy. It is possible that lust may arise in those who try to develop loving-kindness towards those to whom they would normally be sexually attracted. By practicing loving-kindness upon the dead, disciples attain neither access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) nor absorption (*jhāna*). This can be illustrated by the story of the young Monk who practiced *mettā* towards his dead teacher and failed to attain *jhāna* until he redirected his thoughts towards another Elder who was still living. For these reasons, meditation upon loving-kindness should not begin with such persons.

First, disciples should begin by sitting comfortably and imagining that all living beings are around them:[115]

- Their mother is on their left;
- Their father is on their right;
- Other friends, companions, and relatives are behind them;
- Directly in front of them are those to whom they are indifferent;
- Beyond them are those whom they dislike or who have hurt them;
- And, extending in every direction, are all sentient beings.

Then, they should generate a feeling of love in their heart, considering how nice it would be if they could extend love to all these beings. Next, they should continue by fully accepting and loving themselves and by silently repeating the following verse:[116]

> *"May I be happy; may all my thoughts be positive and all my experiences good. May I be free of problems, sickness, and sadness. May my lives be long and peaceful, and may I quickly reach enlightenment."*

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[115] There are several common variations that may be used here instead. For example, after oneself, one can extend universal loving-kindness first to one's teachers, then to a close friend, companion, or relative, then to one's parents, then to a neutral person, then to an enemy, and, finally, to all sentient beings.

[116] The following verse may be substituted here and in the following exercises, making the appropriate changes in the pronouns:

> *"May I be happy and peaceful. May no harm come to me; may no difficulty come to me; may no problems come to me; may I always meet with success. May I always have patience, courage, understanding, and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems, and failures in life."*

The disciple should always begin this meditation with himself or herself as the subject, partly because oneself is the dearest subject of all and the easiest of all persons to love and partly because loving-kindness must be cultivated in oneself as a positive quality before it can be extended to other beings.

In none of the methods given in the scriptures is there any reference to the development of loving-kindness towards oneself. But this does not mean that there are any contradictions here, because the purpose of this exercise is to express the diffusion of loving-kindness by way of attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*). Cultivating love towards oneself is undertaken in order to make oneself the example. It is true that, even though one may develop love for oneself for a hundred years, merely repeating "may I be happy" and so on will not lead to absorption (*jhāna*). But, one who cultivates the wish "may I be happy" looks to oneself as testimony and fully comprehends that "as I wish to be happy, to be free of problems, sickness, and sadness, so also do other beings — they wish for the same." Then, there arises in the disciple the wish that all beings may enjoy happiness and blessings. Furthermore, the importance of suffusing oneself with thoughts of loving-kindness first and then diffusing it to others is declared by the *Buddha* Himself in the following verse (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* I, 75):

> *"Having traversed all quarters with the mind, no one can be found more dear to man than himself. Since each person holds himself most dear, let he who so loves himself bring no harm to other beings."*

First, therefore, disciples should suffuse themselves with loving-kindness, taking themselves as the example, and then turn, in thought, to the person who is dear and viewed with affection by them, or worthy to be honored by them, such as their teacher or someone like their teacher or parents. They will find it easy to suffuse such a person with thoughts of loving-kindness, as they consider various points, such as the person's virtue, learning, and so forth.

The disciples, following this course of meditation, should then turn their thoughts of loving-kindness towards their mother, silently repeating the verse:

> *"May she be happy; may all her thoughts be positive and all her experiences good. May she be free of problems, sickness, and sadness. May her lives be long and peaceful, and may she quickly reach enlightenment."*

In like manner, the disciples should then extend warm, loving energy towards their father, silently repeating the verse:

> *"May he be happy; may all his thoughts be positive and all his experiences good. May he be free of problems, sickness, and sadness. May his lives be long and peaceful, and may he quickly reach enlightenment."*

Next, they should extend warm, loving energy to their friends, companions, and relatives, silently repeating the verse:

> *"May they be happy; may all their thoughts be positive and all their experiences good. May they be free of problems, sickness, and sadness. May their lives be long and peaceful, and may they quickly reach enlightenment."*

Finally, they should extend warm, loving energy to those whom they regard with indifference, silently repeating the verse:

> *"May they be happy; may all their thoughts be positive and all their experiences good. May they be free of problems, sickness, and sadness. May their lives be long and peaceful, and may they quickly reach enlightenment."*

At this point, disciples find happiness and joy, for it is easy to hold their mother, their father, and their friends, companions, and relatives in the same affectionate regard as themselves, and the same may be said for those whom they regard with indifference. However, disciples should not be satisfied with such a fulfillment of this meditation exercise, but should then turn to a more difficult task, namely, the suffusion of warm, loving energy to those whom they dislike or who have hurt them — in other words, their enemies —, silently repeating the verse:

> *"May they be happy; may all their thoughts be positive and all their experiences good. May they be free of problems, sickness, and sadness. May their lives be long and peaceful, and may they quickly reach enlightenment."*

It is here that disciples may find their task most difficult, for, while they are extending thoughts of love and forgiveness towards their enemies, they may recall offenses that these people have committed against them, and thoughts of hatred may arise instead of love. Then, they must enter into a series of exercises to dispel such hatred by persistently dwelling upon loving-kindness directed towards these people, without any feelings of hypocrisy, and harboring no ulterior motives in their mind. If disciples experience difficulty in this effort, they should then repeatedly extend warm, loving energy to any person in one of the previous classes or to a neutral person, continuing until their mind becomes tender and calm. Immediately after emerging from the feelings of loving-kindness that have been developed through this exercise, they should then extend those feelings to those who have aroused enmity, and, by repeating this exercise as often as necessary, all feelings of antipathy will eventually be conquered, for, the very effort of cultivating thoughts of loving-kindness will destroy enmity. While making this effort, disciples should also remember the following admonition of the *Buddha*:

> *"If you get angry and bear a grudge, you are not a true follower of the teachings of the Blessed One. In harboring anger, you are worse than your enemy and will not win the difficult battle before you."*

If, as disciples strive in this manner, the hatred disappears, well and good. If not, they should then concentrate upon the virtues of the *Buddha* (see Chapter 15), the law of *kamma* and rebirth, the analysis of individuality, and other such forms of meditation which bring composure and suppress hatred.

In the contemplation upon the law of *kamma*, disciples should think in this way concerning themselves:

> *"What good is it getting angry with another person? Will not this angry deed, which is the cause of hatred, only lead to your own harm? Indeed, you have your own kamma to think about — you are the owner of your kamma, the inheritor of your kamma; whether you create good or bad kamma, you shall be the inheritor of that kamma. You will be forever tied to the evil deeds that you have done in this life, the results of which will lead you away from the Dhamma and towards the state of suffering."*

Furthermore, they should consider the discourses in the *Anguttara Nikāya* and the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* in which it is said (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* II, 189):

> *"Monks, it is not easy to find a being who has not been a mother, a father, a brother, a sister, a son, or a daughter in this endless round of existence."*

This being the case, the very person to whom one bears a grudge may have been one's mother, father, brother, sister, son, or daughter at some point in a former existence. Considering this possibility, one may be able to check ill feelings towards others.

Lastly, one should reflect upon the matter more philosophically, such as, for example:

> *"My good friend, in getting angry with this person, what, exactly, is it that you are angry with? Are you angry with the hairs of his or her body, or the nails, bones, flesh, skin, and so forth? Or are you angry with the four elements of his or her body, namely, earth, water, fire, and air, or with the five aggregates of form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness? Or are you angry with his or her sense faculties or activities?"*

The purpose of this analysis of the impersonal nature of one's enemy is to bring one to the realization of the fact that the person whom one regards as an enemy is nothing but a combination of mental and physical phenomena, which are perishing with every fleeting moment. Consequently, no individual being can be found against whom to direct one's anger. Thus will the mind be released from ill feelings.

The question may arise here that, if there is neither a person nor individuality as an object of anger, is it not also true to say that there is no person to receive love? How, then, can one develop love towards others? It is, of course, true that there is actually no abiding personality that can be an object either for love or for hatred. However, the psychological value of love is that it means the absence of anger or of the tendency towards hatred. The purpose of the meditation on loving-kindness (*mettā bhāvanā*) is to develop the capacity within ourselves to love everyone equally, even those who have caused us harm, and to eliminate feelings of anger, impatience, selfishness, and other faults, which prevent us from having such love.

In the preliminary stage of this practice, it is helpful for disciples to have an individual object as a basis for increasing the quality of loving-kindness, until, when they have been able to develop it fully, they habitually suffuse it to the whole world, without discrimination. In so doing, they follow the gradual course of immeasurable suffusion, breaking the boundaries that mark off the four divisions of beings: (1) oneself; (2) a dear friend, companion, or relative (including one's parents); (3) a person regarded with indifference; and (4) an enemy. Immediately after the meditation upon each of these four divisions, meditators should diffuse thoughts of loving-kindness to all sentient beings, thus:

> *"May they be happy; may all their thoughts be positive and all their experiences good. May they be free of problems, sickness, and sadness. May their lives be long and peaceful, and may they quickly reach enlightenment."*

Those who have no enemies, or who, in the depths of their heart, do not even entertain an angry or hostile thought against another, should proceed to the exercise of extending warm, loving energy to all sentient beings after the meditation upon those to whom they are indifferent. When they perceive that evenness of mind has been attained, not only towards themselves, but to their mother and father, to their friends, companions, and relatives, and to those to whom they are indifferent, then, inasmuch as they are without enemies, the limit is changed. They can then diffuse loving-kindness (*mettā*) to all sentient beings in equal quality and quantity.

The moment when disciples radiate loving-kindness to all sentient beings without limits, boundaries, or restrictions of any kind, they attain the mental image (*nimitta*) and access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). This mental image may be either a preliminary image (*parikamma nimitta*), which pertains to the preliminary exercise that is practiced with the repetition of the formula for each division of beings, or an acquired image (*uggaha nimitta*), which pertains to the mental presentation of beings. As the meditation upon the acquired image becomes increasingly intense, in due course, the mind attains to access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), which is very near to absorption (*jhāna*).

When the limit is thus broken, disciples practice, develop, and repeat the sign in access concentration until they happily reach attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*), or *jhāna*, the higher state of consciousness, in which they become, as it were, the very embodiment of the spirit of love.

At this point, the disciple is free from the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*), especially from hatred, and is associated with the liberation of the mind through loving-kindness (*mettā-cetovimutti*), which may here be called "*paṭhama-jhāna*", since it is his or her first attainment.

On emerging from it and returning to normal consciousness, disciples pervade the entire universe with their power of love, as we read in the formula:

> *"Here, a Monk dwells pervading one quarter with a mind saturated with loving-kindness, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth; so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he dwells pervading the entire universe with a mind saturated with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility, and without ill will."*

Disciples then practice the meditation upon loving-kindness (*mettā bhāvanā*) repeatedly, and, in due course, they attain to the second and third absorptions (*jhāna*) of the fourfold system, following the *suttanta* teachings, or to the second, third, and fourth absorptions of the fivefold system, following the *Abhidhamma* teachings. Immediately after emerging from any particular absorption (*jhāna*), they continue to radiate this immeasurable, divine state of universal loving-kindness (*mettā*) to all sentient beings, and thus unite themselves with the entire universe, breaking down all barriers and individual boundaries, restrictions, and limitations. Disciples who have followed the teachings of the *Buddha* attain this divine state of heart, in which they are changed from the ordinary human condition to the *brahma*-state, and they are now worthy to receive the eleven blessings explained above:

> *"Happy he sleeps, happy he awakens; he does not have nightmares; he is dear to human beings; he is dear to non-human beings; celestial beings guard him; neither fire, nor poison, nor sword come near to him; quickly, his mind becomes concentrated; his complexion becomes clear; he dies with his mind free from confusion; if he realizes no further attainment, he goes to the brahma-world."*

Taking this as their basis (*pādaka*) for further meditation, they will attain still greater realizations and, eventually, final release — *nibbāna*.

There is yet another method that can be used for extending universal loving-kindness. In this method, the focus is turned away from the particular to embrace an even wider field of activity. It deals with the expansion of the mental object from the beginning up to the state at which attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*) is reached, while the meditation is steadily intensified. Just as those skilled in farming mark off an area to be plowed, so should disciples develop universal loving-kindness, marking off one household, saying:

> *"May the occupants of this house be free from enmity and ill will, may they be rid of sickness and disease, and may they keep themselves happy."*

Making the mind thus tender and compassionate in regard to one household, disciples should then mark off two households, then, in due order, three, four, five, and so on up to ten; then, a whole street, a town or village, a city, a county or district, a state, territory, or province, and so on up to an entire country; then, one continent, then another, and so on up to the whole world and more, as far as the ends of the universe. All should be marked off, and unconditional loving-kindness should be developed to embrace both human and non-human beings, high and low alike. In the same manner, disciples should diffuse all-embracing compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*). An elaborate treatment of this method is given in the *Yogāvacara's Manual*, as we shall see later.

Summing up all these types of beings, present-day Buddhists utter the following verse at the end of their religious services and as part of their training in meditation:

> *"Bhavaggupādāya avīci heṭṭhato-etthantare satta-kāyūpapannā;*
> *Rūpī arūpī ca asañña-saññino-dukkhā pamuñcantu bhusantu nibbutiṁ."*

> *"From the highest existence (bhavagga) down to the lowest (avīci), whatever types of beings exist there, whether with or without physical form, conscious or not conscious, may they be free from suffering and enjoy the bliss of nibbāna."*

It may be noted here that this verse pertains more to compassion (*karuṇā*) than to loving-kindness (*mettā*), for it is combined with the words "*dukkhā pamuñcantu*", which are found in the practice of the meditation on compassion (*karuṇā bhāvanā*).

Karuṇā Bhāvanā

It is in the beginning that the practice of the meditation on compassion (*karuṇā bhāvanā*) differs from that of loving-kindness meditation (*mettā bhāvanā*). For *karuṇā* deals with the emotion of empathy and the feeling of pity that arise at the sight of the suffering of others, such as those stricken with poverty and misery or afflicted with illness or some other disability. Disciples who wish to develop compassion should begin by reflecting upon the evils of lack of compassion and upon the blessings of compassion. In so doing, they should not begin with beloved persons and others close to them, as in the practice of loving-kindness (see above), for those who are dear, neutral, or inimical remain in the same category and are not appropriate mental objects for *karuṇā* in view of their psychological importance. The same is true of persons to whom one would normally be sexually attracted and of those who are dead.

In the *Vibhanga* (p. 273), we find:

> *"How does the Monk abide suffusing one quarter of the world with his mind accompanied by compassion? Just as on seeing a person in poor circumstances*

or afflicted, he should show empathy and pity, in like manner, he suffuses all beings with empathy and pity."

First of all, on seeing someone in a condition of misfortune, sorrow, or pain, disciples should feel empathy and pity, saying: "Alas! This person has fallen into woe. May he [or she] be free from this woe!"

In the event that they do not encounter such a person, disciples should exercise compassion (*karuṇā*) towards those who, although well-to-do and happy, yet are evil-doers. Such people may be compared to those condemned to death. Disciples using compassion as their subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) should establish the quality of *karuṇā* in themselves, showing empathy, and should pity such people in this way:

"However much this person experiences happiness now, is well off, and enjoys his prosperity, he will be deprived of such happiness in the future owing to his evil behavior and lack of good deeds."

Moreover, whenever disciples see or hear of a person who has met with some misfortune of any form of calamity, they should cultivate compassion towards that individual.

After practicing compassion in words, deeds, and thoughts, disciples should develop it in regards to the same types of persons as in the method of universal loving-kindness given above. Finally, breaking down all boundaries and limits, they should continuously suffuse the entire universe with boundless compassion, even after they have emerged from the absorption states (*jhāna*).

However, in the Commentary on the *Anguttara Nikāya*, the order is reversed. Here, *karuṇā* is first directed towards an enemy, then towards one who is miserable, then towards a friend, and, lastly, towards oneself. Buddhaghosa Thera, remarking that this does not agree with the order given in the *Vibhanga* (as mentioned above), prefers the order given there as opposed to that given in the Commentary on the *Anguttara Nikāya*. Furthermore, Buddhaghosa Thera notes that *karuṇā* is to be practiced in the following three ways, in five, seven, and ten forms, just as in the exercise of *mettā*:

1. Suffusing without a limit (*anodhiso pharaṇā*);
2. Suffusing with a limit (*odhiso pharaṇā*);
3. Suffusing through the directions, or quarters (*disāpharaṇā*).

When thus developed, *karuṇā* will confer upon disciples the same eleven blessings explained above:

"Happy he sleeps, happy he awakens; he does not have nightmares; he is dear to human beings; he is dear to non-human beings; celestial beings guard him; neither fire, nor poison, nor sword come near to him; quickly, his mind becomes concentrated; his complexion becomes clear; he dies with his mind free from confusion; if he realizes no further attainment, he goes to the brahma-world."

A special treatment of the meditation on compassion (*karuṇā bhāvanā*) is given in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I, 133), in the chapter on *mahākaruṇā-ñāṇa*, the "knowledge (*ñāṇa*) of great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*)", where it is explained that the *Buddha* feels pity for the world, seeing it suffering in eighty-nine ways. *Karuṇā* is such a great quality of the *Buddha* that it is always ranked with His knowledge (*karuṇā-ñāṇa*).

Muditā Bhāvanā

Disciples practicing sympathetic joy (*muditā*) should begin with one who is near and dear to them and then proceed to others. But, just because someone is a friend, does not, in itself, make him or her a proximate cause of sympathetic joy, much less a neutral person or an enemy. Neither are persons to whom one would normally be sexually attracted nor the dead fit objects for this meditation. A very dear friend, however, may be the proximate cause. Such a friend, therefore, should be the first to be suffused with sympathetic joy. On hearing or seeing a person who is near and dear to them living happy and joyful, enjoying their wealth or good fortune, disciples should express *muditā*, saying: "Happy, indeed, is this person. How good! How wonderful! Their happiness is my happiness!"

The *Vibhanga* (p. 274) states:

> *"How does a Monk abide suffusing one quarter of the world with a mind accompanied by sympathetic joy (muditā)? Just as he would be joyful on seeing a person who is near and dear to him and who arouses his interest, even so, he suffuses all beings with sympathetic joy."*

Thus, after creating the quality of sympathetic joy and exercising it on a very dear person, disciples should, in due course, extend it towards a neutral person, and then towards an enemy, sincerely rejoicing in their happiness, prosperity, or good fortune. Regarding others as equal to themselves, they follow the method of immeasurably suffusing the entire universe with feelings of sympathetic joy, thus increasing the state of attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*) by means of the first three (or four) absorptions (*jhāna*). The rest follows the same course as the meditation on loving-kindness (*mettā bhāvanā*).

The intrinsic value of this exercise is the elimination of envy and jealousy, together with their root of egoism (*ahaṁkāra*), and the manifestation of the divine quality of sympathetic joy (*muditā*) at the happiness, prosperity, or good fortune of others. This is very often expressed as "*anumodanā*",[117] "appreciation", or "delight in the good deeds

[117] *Anumodanā* is one of those Pāḷi words that is very difficult to translate into English. It means, literally, "rejoicing with or after" but implies "asking beings to rejoice in the good *kamma* that one has made and so benefit themselves". It is sometimes translated as "blessing", but this gives the wrong picture, since one is inviting other beings to rejoice at what one has done — one is not invoking some blessing of another power upon them.

and prosperity of others". This is practiced by Buddhists as one of the ten meritorious actions.[118]

Upekkhā Bhāvanā

Disciples who have attained the first three (or four) absorptions (*jhāna*) as a result of practicing universal loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), or sympathetic joy (*muditā*) should emerge from the now familiar third absorption and should then strive to suffuse their mind with the quality of equanimity (*upekkhā*). They see the weakness of the previous three states and perceive the deeper and more tranquil nature of equanimity. Owing to their psychological value, loving-kindness, compassion, and sympathetic joy have some relationship to *rāga*,[119] "greed, lust, grasping", the mental element of clinging, or attachment (*upādāna*). Therefore, the absorption states induced by them are not quite free from the possibility of being invaded by attachment, manifesting as a gross type of joy, which may deprive disciples of the higher attainments. Considering this, disciples should strive to induce equanimity, taking as their mental object a person to whom they are normally indifferent. As stated in the *Vibhanga* (p. 275):

> *"Just as, on seeing a person neither more nor less dear to him, he would be even minded, so he suffuses all beings with equanimity."*

Having thus suffused equanimity towards a person so described, disciples should then turn to one who is near and dear to them, next to an intimate friend, and, afterwards, to an enemy. Finally, they should break down all boundaries, restrictions, and limitations by placing themselves in a position of equality with others and then repeatedly develop the sign of *jhāna*.

When they do this, the fourth (or fifth) absorption arises in them, infusing their heart with the highest *brahmavihāra* quality, which is an even and well balanced mind, and manifesting a spirit of perfect steadiness, while their consciousness rests in a neutral state, unmoved either by joy or woe, happiness or misery.

Equanimity (*upekkhā*) is a common factor of the last absorption (*jhāna*) in every form of meditation. But, here, the last absorption, the *brahmavihāra upekkhā*, does not arise in those who have not first successfully practiced the first three abidings (*vihāra*) (*mettā*, *karuṇā*, and *muditā*), even though they may have attained to the third absorption

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[118] The ten meritorious actions (*puñña-kiriya-vatthu*) are: (1) giving, or generosity (*dāna*); (2) morality (*sīla*); (3) mental development, or meditation (*bhāvanā*); (4) reverence (*apaciti*); (5) service (*veyyāvacca*); (6) transference of merit (*pattānuppadāna*); (7) rejoicing in the merit of others (*abbhānumodana*); (8) expounding the *Dhamma* (*desanā*); (9) listening to the *Dhamma* (*savana*); and (10) straightening one's views (*diṭṭhujukamma*), that is, abandoning wrong views and cultivating right views. Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), p. 172.

[119] *Rāga* is a synonym of *lobha*, "lust, greed".

in some other form of meditation, such as the earth *kasiṇa*, etc. Why so? — because of dissimilarity of the objects. *Brahmavihāra upekkhā* arises only in those who have risen to the third absorption in one of the other three abidings because of the psychological similarity of the objects. The remainder follows the same course given in regard to the meditation on loving-kindness (*mettā bhāvanā*).

Equanimity (*upekkhā*) is the last perfection (*pāramī*) practiced by a *Bodhisatta* for the attainment of Buddhahood. It is, therefore, a "*Buddha*-making quality" (*Buddha-kāraka dhamma*). The nature of a *Bodhisatta's* practice is given in the following lines from the *Cariyā Piṭaka*[120] (p. 102):

> *"Those who do me harm and those who bring me happiness, to all am I equally detached — neither affection nor grudge exist [in me]. Balance as to pleasure and pain, as to praise and blame, in every instance, I am even-minded — this is my perfection of equanimity."*

Practical Instructions

A more detailed account of the practical instructions for the accomplishment of the meditation on the divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*) is given in the *Yogāvacara's Manual* (pp. 68—85; translation, pp. 95—128), where they are placed just after the four formless, or immaterial, realms (*arūpāvacara*). The instructions begin as follows.

> *"When the disciple has finished his usual invocation, performed the preliminary duties, and made the due offerings, let him say: 'In reverence for the teachings of the Buddha Gotama, I strive to fulfill His teachings. I earnestly wish to attain, in the innermost depths of my being, the sign of the acquired or mental image (uggaha nimitta) and the sign of the counterpart or after-image*[121] *(paṭibhāga nimitta), the way to access concentration (upacāra samādhi) of the four diving abidings (brahmavihāra)... May it be an aid to nibbāna'."*

Mettā

After this aspiration, disciples continue with the development of universal loving-kindness (*mettā*), and, sitting down cross-legged on their meditation seat, they prepare themselves, mentally repeating the words:

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[120] The *Cariyā Piṭaka* (Modes of Conduct) is the last book of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*. The *Cariyā Piṭaka* contains thirty-five tales from the *Jātakas* in verse, illustrating seven of the ten perfections.

[121] According to the *Visuddhimagga*, there is no *paṭibhāga nimitta* in the four divine abodes (*brahma-vihāra*), for their objects are the various kinds of living beings perceived through the ordinary senses (*paññati vasena*), and they are also immeasurable (*appamaññā*).

"Ahaṁ sukhi homi! Ahaṁ sukhi homi!"
"May I be happy! May I be happy!"

The meditation is continued, and, in due course, their mind becomes concentrated and enters into the state of *bhavanga*, "life-continuum", and, as they emerge from that state, the earth element (*paṭhavī-dhātu*) appears.

In the *Yogāvacara's Manual*, all forms of meditation are combined with the four elements (*dhātu*, or *mahābhūta*) and with that of space, in the preliminary as well as the absorption (*jhāna*) stages. Woodward[122] translates them as "the element of extension (*paṭhavī*), the element of cohesion (*āpo*), the element of heat (*tejo*), the element of mobility (*vāyo*), the element of space (*ākāsa*)."

This system emphasizes the identification of the power of thought with that of the physical body, thus bringing about the harmony of the mind and body of the disciples, so that they become, in their entire being, the embodiment of the quality upon which they are meditating. This may be considered as the basis of psychic power (*iddhi*), through which disciples are able to control the elements at will. No direct connection with, or

[122] Frank Lee Woodward (1871—1952) was born in Saham Toney in Norfolk, England. He was the son of an Anglican vicar. He had a typical Victorian upbringing and attended a traditional English public school. He won a scholarship to Cambridge University and later turned to teaching, which secured him a deputy headmastership. He later joined the London Theosophical Society and was a friend of Col. Henry Steel Olcott (1832—1907). Col. Olcott offered him the principalship of Mahinda College in Śri Lanka, which he accepted and where he stayed for sixteen years.

From the day Woodward became the principal, the school slowly but steadily progressed. By December 1903, within four months after Mr. Woodward's arrival, the average attendance of the school had risen from 89 to 142. In the same month, students were sent for the Cambridge examination, and, in July 1904, a student of Mahinda College, G. W. Perera, won the university scholarship. By 1905, there were 246 students. It was during that period that Col. Olcott visited the College twice, first in 1904 and again in 1906. The year 1907 was a dark one for Mahinda. Both Col. Olcott and Muhandiram Thomas Amarasuriya died that year. On June 25, 1907, Henry Amarasuriya, the son of the latter, was elected as the manager of the school. A. D. Jayasinghe joined to the staff in 1917. He was appointed as the headmaster and retired in 1938, after a great service.

During this time, Woodward was involved with a plan to move the College to a place with surroundings more conductive to its growth. Mrs. D. F. de Silva of Minuwangoda donated a land called "Devatagawatta". It was a charming hillock with the beauty of the central highlands painted on its eastern sky. It had attracted the attention Woodward, who had a high sense of aesthetic beauty. The panoramic view of Adam's Peak also indicated that it was the most suitable place to build a Buddhist school.

On January 15, 1908, Woodward laid the foundation stone of Olcott Hall. In July and October of that year, the foundation stones for the Amarasuriya block and Matara blocks were laid by H. Amarasuriya, E. S. Balasuriya, and D. N. Weeratunga, respectively. On August 1, 1912, the new building was opened. With the move of the school to its present location, the number of students rose to 300. Woodward's work included taking classes in English, Latin, Pāḷi, Buddhism, and art, in addition to the administrative duties associated with the position of principal of the school. His involvement went much further. He was the designer and architect of its buildings, personally supervised their construction, and often worked alongside the masons. The commemoration of the 21st anniversary of the inauguration of the school and the ninth anniversary of Woodward's arrival was celebrated in 1912. In 1919, Woodward left for Tasmania to devote the remaining thirty-three years of his life to the task of editing and translating Buddhist texts for the Pāḷi Text Society, London. Frank Lee Woodward died in 1952.

explanation of, this system exists elsewhere in the Pāḷi literature. The Commentary on the Mūlapariyāya Sutta (The Root of All Things) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 1) divides each of these elements into four classes: (1) characteristic, (2) conformational, (3) objective, and (4) conceptual. The last two correspond, respectively, to the objects of meditation, such as the *kasiṇas*, and to the absorptions (*jhāna*) induced by them, together with their results.

Here, the *Yogāvacara's Manual* has identified loving-kindness (*mettā*) with the earth element as a sign of success at the end of the preliminary course of meditation. Then, dealing with the second course, it states that, after its appearance, disciples would develop therein the two thought forms, preliminary (*parikamma*) and access (*upacāra*), mentally facing the eastern quarter of the world.[123] The instructions state:

> *"Then let him extend the thought gradually, beginning from the tip of his nose up to ten thousand world-systems, then up to a billion world-systems, then up to an infinite number of world-systems."*

Then again, disciples begin as before and continue meditation until the earth element (*paṭhavī dhātu*) appears and then develop twenty attainments (*appanā*) in one quarter of the world, diffusing universal loving-kindness towards the five kinds of beings: In the eastern quarter, they suffuse "all beings, all creatures, all animals, all persons, and all that have come into existence", each in four ways, thinking thus: "May all beings in the East be friendly, free from malice, and free from harm, and may they keep themselves happy."

This is repeated with the other divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*) in turn. They then cherish thoughts of merit (*puñña*) for all these beings. The same method is to be used in the case of the remaining nine quarters.

Next, disciples develop twenty-eight attainments (*appanā*) in one quarter, taking the seven types of beings — all females, all males, all worthy ones, all unworthy ones, all celestial beings, all human beings, all those in unhappy states — and suffusing each with loving-kindness in the above-mentioned four ways. Thereafter, they send merit to all of them in turn.

Having done this, disciples withdraw the thought from the last class of beings, that is, from all unhappy beings in the Eastern quarter, and allow it to enter into their own inner being, filling the whole body, as it were, while they utter the words: "I am happy! I am happy!"

As an introduction to each of these meditations, disciples should follow the usual course of invocation, preliminary duties, and offerings. After the preliminary course, the period of meditation is measured by means of a wax candle, one to two inches in length, which is allowed to burn until the flame goes out. The suffusion of twenty-eight attainments (*appanā*) is to be accomplished in the case of the other nine quarters in the same

[123] At the end of this course, disciples seem to be in the absorption (*jhāna*) state, for the following methods deal with the suffusion of *jhāna*.

way as with the Eastern quarter, and every course of meditation should be practiced both in forward and reverse order, that is, in the forward order, disciples should begin with themselves and then continually suffuse loving-kindness outward to an infinite number of world-systems, and then, in the reverse order, disciples should start from that point and finish with themselves.

Having attained to the first absorption, disciples proceed by the same method to the second absorption, which is associated with the element of heat (*tejo*). They then advance to the third, the fourth, and, finally, up to the fifth absorption (according to the fivefold method).

Karuṇā

Compassion (*karuṇā*) is to be developed by mentally repeating the words:

"Ahaṁ (dukkhā) pamuñcāmi."
"May I be free (from suffering)."

Thus meditating, the element (*dhātu*) of heat (*tejo*) appears to disciples. Thereupon, they develop preliminary concentration (*parikamma samādhi*) and, then, access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), and, observing them well, they diffuse compassion (*karuṇā*) to all beings (*sabbe sattā*), with the mind pervading the Eastern quarter of ten thousand world-systems. Starting from the head and going forward step by step, they suffuse a billion world-systems and then continue up to an infinite number of world-systems, meditating with the thoughts:

"Sabbe sattā (dukkhā) pamuñcantu."
"May all beings be free (from suffering)."

They continue until the flame of a two inch wax candle has gone out. Following exactly the same methods as those used in the case of loving-kindness (*mettā*), they develop compassion (*karuṇā*) up to the stage of the fifth absorption.

Muditā

In practicing loving-kindness, disciples mentally repeat the words:

"Ahaṁ mā vigacchāmi."
"May I not cease (from the happiness that I have attained)."

Thus meditating, the element (*dhātu*) of cohesion (*āpo*) appears to disciples. Then, they turn their attention to other beings, using the formulas:

"(Sabbe sattā) laddha-sampattito[124] *mā vigacchantu!"*
"May all beings never cease from (enjoying) the prosperity they have acquired!"

"Laddha-yasato[125] *mā vigacchantu!"*
"May they never cease from (enjoying) the glory they have achieved!"

Laddha-pāsaṁsato[126] *mā vigacchantu!"*
"May they never cease from (enjoying) the honor they have attained!"

Laddha-sukhato[127] *mā vigacchantu!"*
"May they never cease from (enjoying) the happiness they have reached!"

Taking their own head as the starting point and continuing until the thought reaches ten thousand world-systems, disciples silently repeat: "May all beings never cease …, etc." (as above). Then, starting from ten thousand world-systems and continuing until the thought reaches a billion world-systems, they silently repeat: "May all beings never cease …, etc." (as above, three times). Finally, starting from a billion world-systems and continuing until the thought extends to an infinite number of world-systems, they repeat: "May all beings never cease …, etc." (as above, three times). In this manner, disciples continue to develop sympathetic joy (*muditā*) towards all beings up to the stage of the fifth absorption.

Upekkhā

Disciples begin the meditation on equanimity (*upekkhā*) by silently repeating the words:

"Kammassako homi."
"May I be the owner of (my own) kamma."

Meditating thus, the element (*dhātu*) of mobility (*vāyo*) appears to disciples. Thereupon, as described above, they develop preliminary concentration (*parikamma samādhi*) and, then, access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), and, observing them well, they diffuse equanimity to all beings (*sabbe sattā*), with the mind pervading the Eastern quarter of ten thousand world-systems, while silently repeating the words:

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[124] *Sampatti* means "success, achievement, good fortune, prosperity". It is the opposite of *vipatti*, "failure, misfortune".
[125] *Yasa*, or *yaso*, can be translated as "glory, fame, renown, good reputation, etc." It is the opposite of *ayasa*, "disgrace, shame, infamy".
[126] *Pāsaṁsa* means "praise, honor".
[127] *Sukha* means "happiness". It is the opposite of *dukkha*, "suffering".

> *"Sabbe sattā kammassakā hontu."*
> *"May all beings be the owners of (their own) kamma."*

The same format should be used with "*sabbe pāṇā*", "all living things", and the rest. After dealing with the Eastern quarter, disciples should practice suffusion both in the way of twenty and twenty-eight attainments (*appanā*), moving in both forward and reverse order. In due course, they will attain to the fifth absorption (*jhāna*) and so become the very spirit of the four divine abidings (*brahmavihāra*).

In the *Yogāvacara's Manual*, each of the four divine abidings is repeated with the five absorptions and then with certain esoteric practices: (1) the grasping of the sixfold word (*cha saddaggahana*); (2) the span (*vidatthi*); (3) the element aggregate (*dhātu samuha*); (4) the fourfold system (*catu-naya*); (5) the fivefold system (*pañca-naya*); (6) concentration (*samādhi*); (7) continuance of the (knowledge of) causality (*dhamma-ciraṭṭhiti*); and (8) the meditation on wax candles (*sitthaka-daṇḍa-dīpa*).

These methods, however, are not found either in the Pāḷi Canon itself or in the Commentaries. As noted in Chapter 20, the first three abodes (*vihāra*) can only induce the first three (or four) absorptions, associated with their particular qualities, for these three divine abidings (*brahmavihāra*) can never be dissociated from the absorption factor (*jhānanga*) of happiness (*sukha*), which must be neutralized if the fourth absorption is to be attained. Equanimity (*upekkhā*), which can only arise in a condition of balance, that is, the maintenance of a neutral position between the extremes of happiness and sorrow, does not arise apart from a feeling of neutrality. Hence, it is a quality of the fourth (or fifth) absorption. Thus, the methods found in the *Yogāvacara's Manual* of combining the divine abidings with all five of the absorptions does not seem to coincide with that given in the scriptures and in the Commentaries.

In the Anguttara Aṭṭhaka-Nipāta (*Anguttara Nikāya* IV, 300), however, the *Buddha* advises a certain Monk:

> *"You, Monk, should practice concentration (samādhi) with initial (vitakka) and sustained application (vicāra) (in the first absorption), then also with sustained but without initial application (in the second absorption), thereafter also without both initial and sustained application, but with rapture (pīti) (in the third absorption), next also without rapture but with happiness (sukha) (in the fourth absorption), and, finally, also without happiness but with equanimity (upekkhā) (in the fifth absorption)."*

The discourse goes on to say that this concentration should be practiced by way of the four *cetovimuttis*, "the boundless deliverance of mind (from mental disturbances)" (*mettā-cetovimutti*, *karuṇā-cetovimutti*, *muditā-cetovimutti*, and *upekkhā-cetovimutti*), and also with that of the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), in due order.

In discussing this point, the *Visuddhimagga* says that, with this admonition, the Blessed One makes it clear that the Monk who has thus attained the fifth absorption,

developing his basic concentration (*mūla-samādhi*) but not being content therewith, should proceed to develop it also with universal loving-kindness (*mettā*) and the other divine abidings (*brahmavihāra*), while causing it to rise to their respective absorptions. This does not mean that the Monk should, or even could, attain all five absorptions through each of the divine abidings, but only those that they are capable of producing. Thus, it is true that loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), and sympathetic joy (*muditā*) are related to the first three (or four) absorptions, while equanimity (*upekkhā*) is related to the fourth (or fifth) and last absorption.

The practice of combining the exercises of the divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*) with other forms of meditation is confirmed by the scriptures. For example, the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (V, 119; etc.) states that they should be practiced together with the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiya*), such as the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*) (according to the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*), and also with the five spirtiual faculties (*indriya*), the five powers (*bala*), and the Noble Eightfold Path (*aṭṭhangika-magga*), and adds that these meditations, diligently pursued, will lead to the eternal happiness of *nibbāna*.

Summary

The four meditations known as "*satara kamaṭahan*" in Sinhalese are the most favored practices of present-day Monks and pious lay people in Śri Lanka. They are: (1) the meditation on the *Buddha* (*Buddhānussati bhāvanā*); (2) the meditation on universal loving-kindness (*mettā bhāvanā*); (3) the meditation on the impurities, or the ten objects of loathsomeness[128] (*asubha bhāvanā*); and (4) the meditation on death (*maraṇasati bhāvanā*). The meditation on loving-kindness (*mettā*) contains the following lines, which summarize the whole method already explained in this and the preceding chapter:

Attūpamāya sabbesaṁ sattānaṁ sukhakāmataṁ,
Passitvā kamato mettaṁ sabbasattesu bhāvaye:
Sukhī bhaveyyaṁ niddukkho ahaṁ niccaṁ ahaṁ viya,
Hitā ca me sukhī hontu majjhattā atha verino.
Imamhi gāmakkhettamhi sattā hontu sukhī sadā,
Tato parañca rajjesu cakkavālesu jantuno.
Samantā cakkavālesu sattā'nantesu pānino,
Sukhino puggalā bhūtā attabhāva gatā siyuṁ.
Tathā itthi pumā ceva ariyā anariyā'pica,
Devā narā apāyaṭṭhā tathā dasa disāsu ca.

(*Catubhāṇavāraṭṭhakathā*,[129] app. 2)

[128] Also known as the "cemetery contemplations" (*sīvathikā*).
[129] This is another name for the *Sāratthasamuccaya*, the Commentary on the *paritta* texts.

Seeing that all beings wish to be as happy as oneself,
Let one practice unconditional loving-kindness to all beings as follows:
May I always be happy! May I always be free from suffering!
Likewise my friends, those to whom I am indifferent, and my enemies.
May the inhabitants of this town always be happy,
Likewise those living in distant lands and on other worlds.
Countless beings and living things throughout the entire universe,
All persons, all creatures, and all that have come to exist,
All those who are male, who are female, and all worthy and unworthy ones,
All in the ten directions, including celestial beings, human beings, and those who are unhappy,
May they all be happy! May they all be free from suffering! ■

22

Āhāre Paṭikkūla-Saññā

In the oldest part of the *Anguttara Nikāya* (I, 30), the meditation (*bhāvanā*) on the loathsomeness, or repulsiveness, of food (*āhāre paṭikkūla-saññā*) is included in the list of perceptions (*saññā*), or ideas. In the *Visuddhimagga*, this meditation is termed "*ekā saññā*", "a single perception", while, in the *Yogāvacara's Manual* (p. 66), it is given as "*ekasaññānussati*", "the recollection of one perception", and it occupies the ninth place in the list of ten recollections (*anussati*). The *Visuddhimagga* explains it as an individual subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) immediately after the four formless, or immaterial, stages (*arūpa*), which will be dealt with in Chapter 24 of this book. The main objective of this meditation is to eliminate greed and sensory excitement caused by food and to free the disciple from both mental attachment to and physical craving for food. There is no special formula designed for this exercise, and disciples who wish to develop the idea of loathsomeness, or repulsiveness, with regard to food should contemplate the futile and lower activities to which their body is prone on account of its demands to be nourished with material food, which, in many ways, is loathsome, or repulsive.

The word "*āhāra*" means "food, sustenance, nutriment" and is defined (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* II, 11) as "*āhāreti'ti āhāro*", "that which brings forth (*ā-har-*, literally, 'to bring forth') its own fruit" through its state as a condition for the fruit's arising, or presence, which state is called "nutriment condition" (*Visuddhimagga* 341, fn. 2). Figuratively, it is applied to the cause of sustenance of all beings that have already been born or that are about to be born (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* II, 11).

> *"Monks, there are four kinds of nutriment for the maintenance of beings that have already been born, or to support those that are about to be born. What are these four? Material food, coarse or fine; contact as the second; mental volition as the third; and consciousness as the fourth."*

Of these, material food (*kabalīkāra āhāra*), coarse or fine, nourishes the forms ending in essence (*ojaṭṭhamaka rūpa*), that is, the four elemental qualities — color (*vaṇṇa*); odor (*gandha*); taste (*rasa*); and nutriment (*ojā*). Contact (*phassa āhāra*) sustains the threefold feelings — pleasant (*sukhā-vedanā* = *somanassa*); unpleasant (*dukkhā-vedanā* = *domanassa*); and neutral, or indifferent (*adukhamasukhā-vedanā* = *upekkhā*). Volition (*manosañcetanāhāra*) produces rebirth (*paṭisandhi*) in the three forms of sentient existence — sensory existence (*kāma-bhava*); form, or fine material,

existence (*rūpa-bhava*); and formless, or immaterial, existence (*ārūpa-bhava*). Consciousness (*viññāṇāhāra*) gives rise to the mental concomitants (*nāma*) and material form (*rūpa*) at the moment of conception.

Of these four, only material food is meant here, in the sense of physical nutriment. Perception which arises by way of reflecting on the loathsomeness, or repulsiveness, of material food is to be understood as "*āhāre paṭikkūla-saññā*". Disciples who wish to develop this perception as a subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) should reflect on the loathsomeness of food, considering the different kinds of things to eat and drink. The word "*paṭikkūla*", "loathsome, repulsive", is to be repeated in the preliminary exercise. When disciples do so, the loathsome and repulsive qualities of food will be apparent in many ways.

A Monk who develops this perception should think of the undesirable conditions and manifold difficulties which he has to endure in going in search of food. He must leave all the necessary and noble duties of his religious life, forsaking the beautiful and calm seclusion of his ascetic dwelling, and, taking his begging bowl, he has to go to the town or village at a particular hour in quest of food. Passing from house to house, bowl in hand, like a pauper, exposing himself to heat and cold, wind and rain, he has to roam about seeking food.

Having thus obtained the food, he seats himself under a tree or in some other such place, and, kneading the food into lumps, he puts it into his mouth. Once in the mouth, it is ground by the teeth, turned over by the tongue, mixed with saliva, and so becomes loathsome, devoid of beauty and attractive odor. When eaten and swallowed, it becomes extremely loathsome, being mixed with stomach fluids, finally ending up as waste products in the bowels and the bladder, ready to be expelled from the body. When not well digested or tainted in some way, it produces indigestion, cramps, and/or gas, or, in extreme cases, vomiting, diarrhea, or dysentery. The ingestion of food is also the means by which intestinal parasites and tape worms enter the body.

Having eaten, people feel happy, delighted, and satisfied, at least for the moment. But, a few hours later, they have forgotten the happy feeling they had after eating. Then, the next day, the digested food is expelled from the body as waste. People enjoy the good-tasting, sweet-smelling, carefully-prepared food in the company of others, but, during the process of elimination, they have to be alone, and their nostrils are offended.

Thus, in many ways, disciples should consider the loathsome, or repulsive, nature of food, repeating the words "*paṭikkūla*, *paṭikkūla*". When they do this, the perception of loathsomeness with regard to material food manifests itself as the sign, or the mental object, of meditation. As they practice it repeatedly, the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) disappear. On account of the intrinsic nature of material food and the intentness on the perception of its loathsome nature, the mind attains to access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). The perception appears in grasping the loathsome, or repulsive, nature of food, and, therefore, this subject of meditation goes under the name of "*āhāre paṭikkūla-saññā*".

Those who develop this meditation turn away from greed and craving for taste. Avoiding all excess, or gluttony, they eat solely to nourish the body and maintain life and good health. By means of the mastery over material food, they attain mastery over the

five physical senses. Thereby, they master passion and realize the transient nature of material phenomena. If they fall short of the goal of deathlessness in the present life, they are bound for a happy destiny as a result of this practice. ■

23

Catudhātu-Vavatthāna Bhāvanā

This is the last of the forty subjects of *samādhi* meditation as they are set forth in the *Visuddhimagga*, where it is defined as "*ekaṁ vavatthānaṁ*", "one determination", and explained under the heading of "*catudhātu-vavatthāna*", "the determination, or analysis, of the four elements". In the *Yogāvacara's Manual* (p. 66), it is given under the heading of "*ekadhātu-vavatthānussati*", "recollection of the analysis of one element", and is the last of the ten recollections. The *Visuddhimagga* defines "*vavatthāna*" as "deciding by way of considering the essential nature" of the four elements. The term is applied to the meditation (*bhāvanā*) that employs the analysis (*vavatthāna*) of the four elements (*catudhātu*) of the body (*kāya*) as a subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*). The main objective of this meditation is not to provide a scientific description of these phenomena but, rather, to free the mind from the conception of individuality in regard to the physical body and to realize its fundamental nature with no thought of personal attribution. The method of pursuing this meditation is described in the scriptures in two ways: (1) briefly, for those of keen intellect, and (2), in detail, for those of normal intellect.

It is briefly explained in the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta[130] (The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness) (*Dīgha Nikāya* II, 290) as part of the contemplation of the body in the following words:

> *"Again, Monks, a Monk reflects upon this body, how it is placed, how it is disposed, in terms of the elements — there is in this body the element of earth (paṭhavī-dhātu), the element of water (āpo-dhātu), the element of fire (tejo-dhātu), the element of air (vāyo-dhātu)."*

[130] This is considered by many to be the most important discourse in the Pāḷi Canon. This *sutta* is very different in character from those that immediately precede it. It recurs word for word, less verses 18—21, as *sutta* no. 10 in the *Majjhima Nikāya*. The "one way" for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and distress, for the gaining of *nibbāna*, is the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*): mindfulness of (1) body, (2) feelings, (3) mind, and (4) mental objects. Detailed instructions are given for mindful awareness of breathing and so on. Thus, under mind-objects, we read, for example: "If sensual desire is present in himself, a monk knows that it is present. If sensual desire is absent in himself, a monk knows that it is absent. Moreover, he knows how unarisen sensual desire comes to arise, he knows how the abandonment of arisen sensual desire comes about, and he knows how the non-arising of the abandoned sensual desire in the future will come about." (According to the Commentary, "Monk" here means anyone who does the practice.) The *sutta* ends with an account of the Four Noble Truths.

Herein, disciples, taking the body as a mere combination of the four elements, analyze its constituents which are of the same character as earth (*paṭhavī*), water (*āpo*), fire (*tejo*), and air (*vāyo*), and contemplate their own body, considering the fact that there is, in this body, no abiding entity, but only these four elements.

By this method, disciples of keen intellect form a concrete estimation of the body and gradually come to apprehend its four constituent elements. They discern that, in this body, whatever part is characterized by hardness, or solidity (*thaddha-lakkhaṇa*), is the earth element (*paṭhavī-dhātu*); whatever is characterized by cohesiveness (*ābandhana*), or fluidity, is the water, or cohesion, element (*āpo-dhātu*); whatever causes maturation or is characterized by warmth, or heating (*paripācana*), is the fire, or heat, element (*tejo-dhātu*); and whatever is buoyant or moving or is characterized by strengthening, or supporting (*vitthambhana*), is the air, wind, or motion, element (*vāyo-dhātu*). While they reflect thus upon the four elements, the concept of "I", "me", or "mine", "man" or "woman", will disappear. The mind will become established in the thought that there are merely elements (*dhātu*), without sentience, without self-entity. As they develop this thought repeatedly, with their attention fixed upon the four elements, there arises concentration that comprehends the elemental nature of the body as its mental object. Inasmuch as this object entails the thought of the phenomenal nature of the four elements, concentration upon it does not reach beyond the state of access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). The mind thus concentrated grasps the nature of various kinds of elements as one compound, and, thereafter, leads to full knowledge.

The detailed account of this meditation for those of normal intellect is given in the following discourses: Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta (The Longer Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant's Footprint) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 28 [I, 185]); Dhātuvibhanga Sutta (The Exposition of Elements) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 140 [III, 237]); Mahārāhulovāda Sutta (The Greater Discourse of Advice to Rāhula) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 62 [I, 421]). In these discourses, each of the four elements is described from two aspects: (1) the internal (*ajjhattika*), or personal, and (2) the external (*bāhira*), or impersonal.

Of these, the four internal elements are divided into forty-two forms, namely, the earth element in twenty forms, that is, twenty solid constituents[131] of the body, beginning with the hairs of the head and ending with excrement; the water element in twelve, that is, twelve watery constituents of the body, beginning with bile and ending with urine; the fire element in four, that is, the bodily heat of warming up, the heat of maturation, the heat of burning up, and the heat of digestion; and the air element of six, that is, bodily air discharging upwards, discharging downwards, the air in the stomach, the air in the intestines, the air supporting the movement of the limbs, and the breath of inhalation and exhalation.

The four external elements referred to are the four great elements, which are called "*mahābhūta*", together with their innumerable forms of manifestation.

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[131] The thirty-two body parts are discussed the Chapter 17 of this book, which deals with the meditation on mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*). Twenty of these thirty-two body parts are made up of the earth element, and twelve of the water element.

The Mahārāhulovāda Sutta (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 62) lists five elements, the fifth being space (*ākāsa*), which is also twofold — (1) internal, or personal, and (2) external, or impersonal. The term "internal space" is applied to those organs of the body that contain a space, or cavity, such as the mouth, nostrils, ears, etc. They are called "*upādā-rūpa*", forms formed by or dependent upon the combination of the other four elements.

Internal space also includes the space between two parts of the body, which is called "*pariccheda-rūpa*", "circumferential space, or separation (between visible forms)". These four or five elements are given as a subject of meditation that is concerned with physical objects (*rūpa-kammaṭṭhāna*). In the Dhātuvibhanga Sutta (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 140), however, six elements are listed, the sixth being the element of consciousness (*viññāṇa-dhātu*), which is given as a subject of meditation that deals with immaterial objects (*arūpa-kammaṭṭhāna*).

According to the detailed method, disciples of normal intellect who wish to develop this subject of meditation should study the four elements in detail from forty-two aspects after receiving instruction from their teacher. Living in a suitable dwelling, as described above, and having performed all their duties, they should retire into solitude and seclusion and develop the subject from the following four aspects:

1. Synthetic contemplation of the constituents of the four elements;
2. Analytic contemplation of the constituents of the four elements;
3. Synthetic contemplation of their characteristics;
4. Analytic contemplation of their characteristics.

Let us now look at each of these aspects in more detail:

1. Proceeding with the first of these methods, disciples discern the attribute of rigidity, or solidity, in twenty parts of the body as the earth element (*paṭhavī-dhātu*); the attribute of cohesion in fluids in twelve parts of the body as the water element (*āpo-dhātu*); the heat that brings to maturity in four parts of the body as the fire element (*tejo-dhātu*); and the attribute of buoyancy and inflation in six parts of the bodily air as the air element (*vāyo-dhātu*). As they thus contemplate, the elemental nature of the body manifests itself and eliminates the idea of individuality. As they repeatedly turn and fix their attention to them, access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) arises in the way previously described.

2. If the subject of meditation is not realized by the first method, disciples should then contemplate the four elements, analyzing and classifying their constituent parts. With regard to the first two elements, they should consider the thirty-two parts of the body as previously mentioned in connection with the meditation on mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*) (see Chapter 17), noting each part as void of consciousness and void of sentient individuality. In the same way, they should analyze and consider the constituents of the remaining two elements as being void of consciousness, void of individuality, and as mere elements that form the separate parts of the body. As they

thus establish the thought, the elemental nature of the body manifests itself, and the mind attains to access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*).

3. In the third method, disciples should develop the subject by contemplating briefly the four elements together with their characteristics. They should discern that, in the twenty solid parts of the body, the characteristic of hardness, or solidity, is the earth element, that, in the same parts, the characteristic of cohesion is the water element, the characteristic of bringing to maturity is the fire element, and the characteristic of supporting and moving is the air element. In the twelve watery parts, they should discern that the characteristic of cohesion is the water element, the characteristic of bringing to maturity is the fire element, the characteristic of supporting and moving is the air element, and the characteristic of hardness, or solidity, is the earth element.

   In the four divisions of the fire element, disciples should discern that the characteristic of bringing to maturity is the fire element, the characteristic of support, which is unanalyzable, is the air element, that the characteristic of cohesion is the water element, and that the characteristic of hardness is the earth element. In the six divisions of the air element, they should discern that the characteristic of inflation and support is the air element and that, therein, the unanalyzable characteristic of hardness is the earth element, that the characteristic of bringing to maturity is the fire element, and that the characteristic of cohesion is the water element. As they so contemplate, the elements manifest themselves, and the mind attains to access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*).

4. In the fourth and last method, disciples should develop the subject by enlarging and classifying the characteristics of the four elements in the following manner: In each of the thirty-two body parts, they should discern the four elements. They should discern the characteristics of hardness, cohesion, maturation, and support in the hair as the earth, water, fire, and air elements, respectively. Likewise, in all parts and divisions, the four elements should be discerned. When this is done, the elements manifest themselves to disciples without any individual conceptualization, and the mind attains to access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*).

Moreover, the four elements should be contemplated according to the following methods:

1. As the meaning of terms;
2. As groups;
3. As particles;
4. As general characteristics (purpose and manifestation);
5. As origin;
6. As different and the same;
7. As divisible and indivisible;
8. As similar and dissimilar;

9. As internal and external;
10. As mutual supports;
11. As non-conscious phenomena.

These various methods may be explained as follows:

1. As the meaning of terms: Earth is called "*paṭhavī*", in the sense of "extension"; water is called "*āpo*", in the sense of "cohesion"; fire is called "*tejo*", in the sense of "heating"; and air is called "*vāyo*", in the sense of "motion". They are all included in the term "*dhātu*", "element", because, ultimately, they are void of individuality or personality, and because they cause and inflict ill.

2. As groups: The element of earth encompasses twenty forms, beginning with hairs of the head, and the element of water encompasses twelve forms, beginning with bile. In this connection, the *Visuddhimagga* (I, 364) states:

   "Color, smell, taste, nutritive essence, and the four elements — when these eight states come together, then the common label 'head hair' comes into use. Apart from these eight, there is no 'head hair' [to be found]."

   Hence, "head hair" is just a collection of these eight states. Likewise, the other parts of the body are just collections of these eight states. When each part of the body is taken together with the life faculty and the state of being, it proves to be merely a collection of ten states. Taken in abundance, they are known as the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element. Thus, disciples should consider them as groups.

3. As particles: This body consists of innumerable particles in the form of cells and muscles belonging to the earth element, which, in turn, can be reduced to the minutest particles and to the finest dust. Being compounded by the water element, brought to maturity by the fire element, and supported by the air element, they are not scattered, not destroyed, not paralyzed. When thus constituted, they give rise to the notion of "man" or "woman", manifesting in various forms, small or large, tall or short, hard or soft. When incorporated in the body, the water element, which is fluid and has the power of cohering, is established on the earth, guarded by fire, and supported by air, and so does not trickle, does not flow. Not trickling, not flowing, it creates a fresh and full appearance. The fire element, having the characteristics of heat, being established on the earth, held together by water, supported by air, digesting whatever is eaten or drunk, brings this body to maturity and is the cause of its appearance. Being matured by it, the body does not show traces of putrefaction. The air element, having the characteristics of moving and supporting, being established on the earth, held together by water, guarded by fire, passing along the various limbs with the blood stream, supports the body. Being supported by it, the body remains upright,

does not fall. Moved by another air element, it sets the body going, standing, sitting, and lying down. It bends, stretches, and manipulates the body, together with its hands and feet. In this way, the physical body arises, composed of the elements, like a magic trick which deceives the ignorant with dissolving appearances of masculinity and femininity. Thus, disciples should contemplate the physical body as the ceaseless coming together, or combining, of minute particles — the four elements.

4. As general characteristics (purpose and manifestation): Hardness, or solidity, is the characteristic of the earth element. Its purpose is to be the resting place of associated states. Receiving them is its manifestation. Flowing, or trickling, is the characteristic of the water element. Developing is its purpose. Combining, or cohering, is its manifestation. The fire element has the characteristic of heating. Its purpose is bringing to maturity. Bringing about a soft and smooth state is its manifestation. Inflation is the characteristic of the air element. Its purpose is supporting associated elements. Moving, or motion, is its manifestation.

5. As origin: Of the forty-two parts of the four elements (*catudhātu*), the stomach, excrement, pus, and urine originate from the season (*utu*). Tears, sweat, saliva, and mucus originate from season and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). Heat originates from *kamma*. The breath originates from consciousness. All the rest originate from the following sources: *kamma*, consciousness, season, and nutritive essence (*āhāra*). This is the way in which the origin of the elements should be considered.

6. As different and the same: All the elements are different in their characteristics, purpose, manifestation, and original source. They are the same in being material, primary, elements, states, impermanent, and so on.

   All of the elements (*dhātu*) are considered to be material (*rūpa*), because they cause vexation and appear in physical forms. They are called "primary" (*mahābhūta*, literally, "great phenomena") because they manifest themselves in the intensity of their metamorphoses and natural activities as the vast phenomenal universe. They are also called "elements" because their appearance is different from their real nature. Just as a magician shows water as a gem when it is not a gem, a stone as gold when it is not gold, himself as a *yakkha*[132] when he is not a *yakkha*, so, these elements, although not really, for example, indigo, appear as a material substance of indigo color, and, although not yellow, nor red, nor white, they appear in these colors, and, not being human or animal in reality, they appear in these forms.

   They are all elements because they exist through their own capacity of existing, bearing the characteristic of a vast elemental state, devoid of absolute reality, devoid of individuality.

   Because they possess their own nature and last their own length of time (moment), they are called "states" (*dhamma*). Inasmuch as they are ever-decaying, they are "impermanent" (*anicca*). In being dangerous, they are "suffering" (*dukkha*).

[132] In popular belief, a *yakkha* is a "ghost, goblin, or ogre".

Owing to their non-entity, they are "void of self" (*anattā*). Thus, all elements are the same in being matter, primary, elements, states, impermanent, and so on, but they differ in characteristics, etc. Hence, disciples should contemplate them, considering the ways in which they are different and the ways in which they are the same.

7. As divisible and indivisible: Arising together, the elements are indivisible, for the eight qualities — color, odor, taste, nutritive essence, extension, cohesion, heat, and motion — cannot actually be separated. However, they are divisible in regard to their characteristics. Thus, the elements should be considered as divisible and indivisible.

8. As similar and dissimilar: The first two elements (earth and water) are alike in their heaviness, the last two (heat and air) in their lightness. The first two are unlike the last two, and the last two are unlike the first two. Thus, they should be considered as similar and dissimilar.

9. As internal and external: Those elements that are the foundations of the six physical bases of consciousness (the five sense organs plus the mind), which are combined with the sense faculties, words, and deeds, and which are born of *kamma*, consciousness, climate, and nutrition, are internal. The others are external. Thus, they should be considered as internal and external.

10. As mutual supports: The earth element (*paṭhavī-dhātu*), held together by water, guarded by fire, supported by air, is the resting place of the other three primary elements. The water element (*āpo-dhātu*), resting on earth, guarded by fire, and supported by air, is the cause which binds the other three primary elements together. The fire element (*tejo-dhātu*), resting on earth, held together by water, and supported by air, is the cause which matures the other three primary elements. The air element (*vāyo-dhātu*), resting on earth, held together by water, matured by fire, is the cause which supports the other three primary elements. Thus, they are to be considered as mutual supports of each other.

11. As non-conscious states: The earth element does not know "I am earth", or "I am the resting place of the other elements". Nor do the other three elements know, "The earth element is our resting place". The same is true of every other element. Thus, they are to be considered as non-conscious.

As disciples use these methods of contemplation, in one of them, the elements will be manifested as the subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), and, when they repeatedly fix their attention upon it, there arises access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), which comprehends the elemental nature of the physical body. This concentration, arising through the power of the knowledge that comprehends the four elements, is called "*catu-dhātu-vavatthāna*", "the determination, or analysis, of the four elements". Disciples who devote themselves to this practice will soon realize the state of voidness (*suññatā*), will eliminate the idea of individual existence (*puggala*), and will be free from all attachments

(*parāmāsa*). Consequently, they will overcome fear and not be elated by the desirable nor depressed by the undesirable. They will be great in wisdom, assured of deathlessless, and bound for a happy destiny.

Herein, the meditation practices leading to the form, or fine material, absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*), set forth in the system of *kammaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*, comes to an end. ■

Appendix
The Psychological Process in Rūpajjhāna

At the beginning of the mental process in which absorption (*jhāna*) is induced, the normal mind engaged in contemplating the after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) falls into "*bhavanga*", "the passive flow of being", "the life-continuum". It is at just that moment that it may seem that attainment (*appanā*) will arise.

It is an inherent characteristic of the mind (*citta-niyāma*) that, at the end of every mental activity, or thought process (*cittavīthi*), the mind reverts to its original state, which is termed "*bhavanga*" in Buddhism. The commentators explain the term as "*bhavassa angaṁ*", meaning "*kārana*", "the cause of the continuity of life", "*bhava*", "existence, or being".

From a Buddhist point of view, this existence has two sides: (1) *kamma-bhava*, the active side of existence and (2) *uppatti-bhava*, the passive side of existence. The latter, *uppatti-bhava*, is based upon the mental flow produced by the reproductive, or regenerative, *kamma* (*janaka-kamma*) of the past, which causes existence to last so long as the power of that *kamma* is not destroyed or exhausted. This state of mind, based upon past *kamma*, is the cause of present existence and is, therefore, termed "*bhavanga*". It is distinct from the category of *kamma-bhava*, which is the active side of the present life to which our thought processes belong.

In its secondary meaning, *bhavanga* implies a mental state that has sometimes been compared to what is called "subconsciousness",[133] the state in which the thought process is "below the threshold" of full consciousness. Thus, it corresponds to what is also called "subliminal consciousness". In Buddhism, however, *bhavanga* is not identical with thought, although thought originates from it. Hence, it is called "*vīthi-mutta*", "process-free", and so contrasted with "*cittavīthi*", "mental activity", "thought process", that is, the active mind.

Bhavanga always exists as a flow, or stream, of being, called "*bhavanga-sota*", and, when this flow rises into direct cognition (*āvajjanā*), the mind enters into the realm of thought and is then known as "*cittavīthi*".

When the mind falls into *bhavanga* in the state of attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*), it is stimulated by the power of the previous intention and rises up, breaking its flow through the usual mental process. This is influenced by the rate of physical vibration caused by the life force. This process consists of three thought moments: (1) the first is one of transition, that is, the passing moment of *bhavanga* (*atīta*); (2) the second is vibration (*calana*); and (3) the third is the interruption, that is, the termination, or cutting off, of the flow (*upaccheda*). At the end of the third moment, the *bhavanga* stream is checked, and the mind, wholly impressed with the after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) of, for instance, the earth-*kasiṇa* (*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*), rises to cognize

[133] Though it is sometimes rendered in English by the term "subconsciousness", *bhavanga* differs in several respects from the usage of that term in Western psychology.

through the mental door (*mano-dvāra*). Inasmuch as it is free from the hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) and attention to external things, it does not associate with the usual thought-moments (*cittakkhaṇa*) that pertain to sensory cognitions. Hence, there arise only four or five thought moments, known as "*javana*", "impulse moments", associated with initial application (*vitakka*), sustained application (*vicāra*), rapture (ecstasy, zest, pleasurable interest) (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*), and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*), which are stronger than in normal consciousness. This is called "*appanā-vīthi*", the "transitional process" from normal consciousness to super-normal. The first *javana* moment of the process is termed "*parikamma*", "preliminary". It is so called because it prepares the mind for the state of absorption (*jhāna*). The second *javana* moment is termed "*upacāra*", "access", or "neighborhood", during which the normal mind approaches, or comes near to, *jhāna*. This is followed by the third *javana* moment, termed "*anuloma*", "adaptation", during which the mind qualifies for *jhāna*. Then follows the *javana* moment called "*gotrabhū*", "maturity moment", which raises consciousness from the normal state to the super-normal. It cuts off the sensory sphere (*kāmavacara*) state of consciousness and evolves into the form (*rūpa*), or fine material, class of higher consciousness. Finally, there arises the moment termed "*appanā*", "attainment", or the stage during which *jhāna* ensues.

In the case of the fourfold division, which arises in those of quick intuition (*khippābhiñña*), the preliminary moment (*parikamma*) does not occur. They therefore begin at once with the access moment (*upacāra*), and, during the fourth moment, they realize the attainment moment (*appanā javana*). Immediately after the *appanā javana*, the mind once again falls into *bhavanga*. Then, cutting off the *bhavanga* flow, mental cognition rises to reflect on *jhāna*, and, thus, the process of *jhāna* reflection follows. ■

24

Arūpasamāpatti

The next step in the development of *samādhi* meditation culminates in the attainment of four additional absorption states, which are generally termed "*arūpasamāpatti*", "formless (*arūpa*), or immaterial, attainments (*samāpatti*)". These attainments are nearly always closely associated with the four form, or fine material, absorption (*rūpajjhāna*) formulas, being successive stages of the whole meditation process. Indeed, the *arūpasamāpatti* are only occasionally mentioned[134] without reference to the *jhāna* formulas. Whereas the four form, or fine material, absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*) are to be attained by meditation upon a visible form or some concept derived therefrom, the formless states are attained by passing completely beyond all form perceptions and are, therefore, known as *arūpa*, "formless", the states without a material substance.

In the case of the four *rūpajjhāna* formulas, the five psychological factors, initial application (*vitakka*), sustained application (*vicāra*), rapture (ecstasy, zest, pleasurable interest) (*pīti*), happiness (*sukha*), and one-pointedness of mind (*ekaggatā*), are reduced in each successive *jhāna*, the concentration of mind being increasingly intensified until the fourth *jhāna* is reached. However, in the *arūpajjhāna* stages, the attainment of each successive stage constitutes the complete elimination of the previous stage.

The first of these *arūpajjhāna* stages is attained by removing the meditation object of the fourth *jhāna*.[135] Thereafter, the elimination of the first stage gives way to the second, the elimination of the second stage gives way to the third, and the elimination of the third stage gives way to the fourth.

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[134] In the Brahmajāla Sutta (The Net of Brahmā) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 1), they are mentioned separately as four of the seven circumstances in which certain ascetics establish a nihilistic view (*uccheda-diṭṭhi*). In the *Anguttara Nikāya* (IV, 427), they are mentioned alone in the full formulas as the four spheres where sense impressions cease to exist.

[135] Strictly speaking, the four formless, or immaterial, absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*) are extensions of the fourth form, or fine material, absorption (*rūpajjhāna*), inasmuch as they possess the same two constituents — (1) one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*) and (2) concentration (*samādhi*). The fourth fine material absorption is also the base, foundation, or starting point (*pādaka-jhāna*), of the higher spiritual powers (*abhiññā*). The term "*pādaka-jhāna*", "foundation-forming absorption", also refers to any absorption used as the base, foundation, or starting point for insight (*vipassanā*) leading to the supramundane paths (*ariya-puggala*). Thus, the foundation of the higher spiritual powers is the fourth form, or fine material, absorption, while any absorption is suitable for the development of insight. Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), pp. 83—85 and 141.

The formulas for each of these stages are as follows (*Dīgha Nikāya* II, 112; *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 41; I, 159; etc.):

1. "Passing entirely beyond form perceptions,[136] sense perceptions having disappeared, paying no attention to perceptions of diversity, thinking 'space is infinite', one attains to and abides in the sphere of infinite space (*ākāsānañ-cāyatana*)."

2. "Passing entirely beyond the sphere of infinite space, thinking 'consciousness is infinite', one attains to and abides in the sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*)."

3. "Passing entirely beyond the sphere of infinite consciousness, thinking 'there is nothing', one attains to and abides in the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāya-tana*)."

4. "Passing entirely beyond the sphere of nothingness, one attains to and abides in the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception (*nevasaññā-n'āsaññāya-tana*)."

These formless attainments (*arūpasamāpatti*) and the training required for their fulfillment were known prior to the *Buddha's* enlightenment, for the last two of these four stages are mentioned in the Ariyapariyesana Sutta (The Noble Quest) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 26), where they are said to have been attained by two ascetics, Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta.

The *Buddha* Himself, in the course of the long struggle that preceded His enlightenment, had studied the systems of training taught by these two ascetics, had practiced these systems, and had attained the formless stages as a result of His efforts. But, He realized that this training would not bring Him final liberation from the taints (*āsava*), the release for which He was striving, and, therefore, He left these two teachers and continued His quest alone.

Later in the same discourse, the true method of attaining the four formless, or immaterial, stages (*arūpajjhāna*) is described, as indicated in the formulas given above. This method of training presupposes that disciples are proficient in the attainment of the four form, or fine material, absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*) and also requires them to possess insight knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) and perfect purity of mind (*citta-visuddhi*), if they are to gain final release, which is the complete cessation of all conditioned perceptions and feelings. In other words, this release is only possible when knowledge (*paññā*) is perfected by insight (*vipassanā*) and the mind is purified by passing through the form, or fine material, absorption (*rūpajjhāna*) stages of concentration (*samādhi*).

[136] By "form perceptions" (*rūpa-saññā*) are meant the absorptions of the form, or fine material, sphere as well as those objects themselves.

The two principles of concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) are found in the formulas under the names of "*ceto-vimutti*", "boundless deliverance (*vimutti*) of mind (*ceto* [= *citta*]) (from mental disturbances)", and "*paññā-vimutti*", "deliverance (*vimutti*) through wisdom (*paññā*), understanding, or knowledge", respectively, in the sense of the concentration and knowledge that culminates in Arahatship. Therefore, the perfection of Arahatship may be regarded as the goal at which the paths of concentration (*samādhi*) and insight (*vipassanā*) meet.

The Buddhist system of training in the formless, or immaterial, absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*) is distinguished from the meditation exercises previously discussed in this book in that it includes insight (*vipassanā*), which is a most important factor. It is essential for disciples training themselves in *samādhi* to pass through all the successive stages of its development: (1) preliminary concentration (*parikamma samādhi*), existing at the beginning of the meditation exercise; (2) access, or neighborhood, concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), approaching, but not yet attaining, the first absorption (*jhāna*); and (3) attainment concentration (*appanā samādhi*), the level of concentration that is present during the absorptions.

A detailed exposition of the formless, or immaterial, absorption (*arūpajjhāna*) stages is given in the *Abhidhamma*, where they are defined and classified according to the position they occupy in the whole series of psychological states (*Dhammasanganī* 55-6158-60; *Vibhanga* 183, 245; etc.)

When the mind has attained to these formless (*arūpa*) stages, its position is that of the fourth form, or fine material, absorption (*rūpajjhāna*), for it still contains the two elements, (1) equanimity (*upekkhā*) induced by the purification (*visuddhi*) of mindfulness (*sati*) and (2) one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*), which were present in the fourth absorption. However, these elements are now in a more advanced and subtle condition, being free from all perceptions of a sensory nature. It is for this reason that the four formless (*arūpa*) stages are to be found as concomitants of the last form, or fine material, *jhāna*, and they actually appear under the term "*jhāna*"[137] in the *Abhidhamma* (*Dhammasanganī* 55; *Vibhanga* 183). Such passages show a further important aspect of the system of *jhāna*, for, with this linking together of the formless (*arūpa*) stages and the form (*rūpa*), or fine material, absorptions, an eightfold system emerges. These eight stages later came to be known collectively as "*aṭṭha-samāpatti*", "the eightfold attainment".

The four formless absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*) also form an integral part of three other systems of attainments: (1) the *aṭṭha-vimokkha*, "the eight stages of release"; (2) *nava anupubba vihāra*, or *vihāra samāpatti*, "the nine stages of successive attainments"; and (3) *nava anupubba nirodha*, "the nine successive stages of cessation (of thoughts)".

According to Buddhist teaching, disciples should bear in mind that the objective of attaining these stages is to achieve mastery of concentration (*samādhi*), for, without this mastery, their training would be incomplete. Moreover, disciples know that their

[137] In the *Nikāyas* of the *Sutta Piṭaka*, the *arūpa* formulas are not associated with the word "*jhāna*", except for one instance in the *Anguttara Nikāya* (IV, 425), where only the first *arūpa* stage appears with the word "*jhāna*" in immediate sequence to the four form, or fine material, absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*). However, this may be an editor's error. If it is not, then, it is a very good reference.

purpose is to release the mind from hindrance after hindrance, and thus to render it more and more apt and worthy to acquire the superhuman qualities that are appropriate to a Noble One (*ariya*, or *ariya-puggala*).

There may be individuals whose objective in developing the formless absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*) is to be reborn in the formless, or immaterial, realms (*arūpāvacara*), free from the physical body and all the imperfections and pain to which it is subject. However, from the Buddhist point of view, to be reborn in such realms is not only a disadvantage, but also the loss of a rare opportunity for the attainment of *nibbāna*, for *nibbāna* lies almost within the grasp of such individuals, if they would only realize it, and should not be sacrificed for mere psychic existence, for even those who dwell in these exalted realms are still subject to the vicissitudes of cyclic existence (*saṁsāra*).

The Noble Ones (*ariya*) who are Stream-Winners (*Sotāpanna*) or Once-Returners (*Sakadāgāmi*) are reborn in the realms corresponding to these stages (*Abhidhammattha Sangaha* I, §§26—28). But existence in these realms is not a disadvantage for them, since they are already on the path to *nibbāna*.

Disciples who take *samādhi* as the road to their goal naturally pass through all these absorption processes, which are to them like signposts pointing to their destination. Furthermore, Monks who are well trained in these attainments become fully qualified for the acquisition of higher knowledge (*abhiññā*) and are properly equipped for supernormal achievements. Finally, these practices, taken as a unified whole, lead them to the eternal peace of *nibbāna*[138] (*Anguttara Nikāya* IV, 422).

This method of attaining the formless stages, which was briefly described in the formulas given above, has been justly claimed as unique to Buddhism, since it bears the distinguishing mark of insight (*vipassanā*). Thus, disciples who have followed the Buddhist method are prevented by this insight from entertaining erroneous conceptions. Such disciples would, therefore, reject the nihilistic views held by certain ascetics and Brahmins as a result of their lack of full knowledge (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 34—36).

The attainment of the first formless absorption (*arūpajjhāna*), as implied by its formula, proceeds out of the fourth form, or fine material, absorption (*rūpajjhāna*). Disciples emerging from the fourth *jhāna*, considering its tranquility as gross, inasmuch as it is based upon a form object, remove it entirely from their mind, thinking that the calmness of the formless state is higher. They do this by mentally extending the object of the fourth *jhāna* to the limits, as much as they desire. Without adverting to the form perception (*rūpa-saññā*), attending to the space surrounding it, they hold the thought: "space is infinite".[139] The continuous repetition of the same thought brings disciples to

[138] That is, the state of Arahatship. This is frequently referred to as "*āsavakkhaya*", "the destruction of the taints, or cankers". Discourses concluding with the attainment of Arahatship by the listeners often end with the words: "During this utterance, the hearts of the *Bhikkhus* were freed from the taints through clinging no more" (*anupādāya āsavehi cittāni vimucciṁsū'ti*). Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), pp. 27—28.

[139] Inasmuch as it has neither beginning nor end, space is boundless, limitless, infinite. Here, disciples take it as a whole and regard it as infinite.

the point at which their mind becomes free from the object of the fourth *jhāna* and identified with infinite space. They are then said to have attained the sphere of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*), where the mind rests self-possessed, free from all sensory perceptions. Having gained complete mastery of it, they dwell in it.

We have already seen that this first formless *jhāna* is attained by the removal of the form object of the fourth form *jhāna*, and herein lies its weakness. It is conceivable, for example, that, coming upon the empty site of a house that had once stood there and which had once been familiar, one would possibly form a mental picture of the house. In like manner, in this formless *jhāna*, based not upon a form (*rūpa*), but upon the space (*ākāsa*) left by the removal of that form, there remains the possibility that form perception may unexpectedly arise, for the mind has been accustomed to dealing with form from time immemorial.

Recognizing this weakness of the first formless *jhāna* stage, disciples thereafter proceed to the second stage. The thought arises within them that consciousness, which can embrace infinite space, must itself be infinite. Thus, they realize: "consciousness is infinite". Continuous repetition of this thought brings them to the second stage, the sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*), in which they experience a calm more profound than that of the previous stage.

But, this stage of infinite consciousness is overshadowed, in its turn, by that of infinite space. Again realizing that this is a possible source of weakness, since their mind may revert to the sphere of infinite space, disciples resolve to proceed to the greater calm of the third stage, the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*). They then establish the thought: "there is nothing". They continue to repeat this thought until their mind rests upon nothingness — the annulment of their previous thought concerning the infinity of consciousness. In due course, they attain to the third stage, that of entry into the sphere of nothingness. They practice the attainment of this stage, traverse and experience it, so that, whenever they wish, they can enter it.

However, there still remains the possibility that the thought of the infinity of consciousness may intrude and that the mind may slip back to the sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*). Therefore, disciples, realizing that they have not yet reached the highest, proceed to the fourth and last stage, at which they enter the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception (*nevasaññā-n'āsaññāyatana*). This is achieved by the removal of the third stage, and there now remains only an inexpressibly subtle trace of perception. Disciples still feel the peace and wonder of the third formless absorption (*arūpajjhāna*). They think how wonderful it was that the consciousness should remain in that state of nothingness. Such perceptions, concerning the third formless absorption still occur to their mind, and they may thus be said to possess a subtle form of perception. Nevertheless, they have no desire to leave the fourth stage and return to the third, which is inferior in quality. Therefore, since this lingering trace of perception concerning the third stage produces no result, there is said to be no active perception within them. This is the condition known as "*nevasaññā-n'āsaññāyatana*", "neither perception nor non-perception".

This is the point at which the mind, after passing through the absorption (*jhāna*) processes, arrives at the condition of complete self-possession, free from all thoughts of the world. This condition is so subtle and difficult to express that some mistake it for *nibbāna*, or final release, an error committed by certain pre-Buddhist sages such as Uddaka Rāmaputta. Sublime and tranquil as it is, however, the final formless absorption still lacks the stability of *nibbāna*. As we have seen, it still retains a slight residue of perception as a legacy from the third stage, and disciples may therefore desire to remain in the fourth stage, regarding it as the consummation of the development of consciousness. This residue of desire and the erroneous view that gave rise to it, together with mental perceptions concerning the third formless sphere (*arūpāvacara*), are termed "*āsava*" in this stage of *arūpa*. They linger like the basic cause of a sickness that has not quite been eradicated. The mind in this stage is, therefore, subject to deterioration (*Anguttara Nikāya* IV, 417). As long as this taint remains, it is liable to precipitate the mind to the ordinary condition of existence, to which it has so long been accustomed, just as loose pebbles giving way beneath the feet of those climbing on a lofty mountain may plunge them to the depths below.

The *Buddha*, realizing this defect of the fourth formless, or immaterial, absorption (*arūpajjhāna*), through His knowledge of the law of causality, advanced a step further, that is, to the complete cessation of the taints (*āsava*), the residues of: (1) sense desire (*kāmāsava*); (2) craving for (eternal) existence (*bhavāsava*); (3) false views (*diṭṭhāsava*); and (4) ignorance (*avijjāsava*). This is brought about by the consciousness that, burning with the fire of insight (*vipassanā*), destroys the germinating power of the taints, just as a fire can destroy the power of a seed to germinate. This attainment is, therefore, termed "*nibbāna*", since it is the complete cessation, destruction, elimination of the taints.

After the full training in these stages, disciples experience the perfect and ultimate tranquility while yet living, and they remain undisturbed by the outside world. When they are in the *arūpajjhāna* state, disciples take in no sense impressions, although they are surrounded by objects that are perceivable by the senses, for the mind, from the first stage of *arūpajjhāna* up to the last, is not sustained by way of the senses. For example, Āḷāra Kālāma, who was proficient in these states as far as the third, had the power to tranquilize the sense faculties so that he did not see or hear five hundred carts passing near him (*Dīgha Nikāya* II, 130). Thus, this condition is free from even the weakest qualities connected with the world of the senses. But, there still exists mind-sense itself, with the shadows of past experiences. In the Buddhist system, the fourth *arūpajjhāna* of those who have attained the state of Non-Returner (*Anāgāmi*) and *Arahat* leads to the attainment of *saññā-vedayita-nirodha*, "extinction of feeling and perception", the fifth and final stage of tranquility, where all sense perceptions and feelings, together with all the activities of consciousness, are completely stilled.

These five states of higher mind are most subtle and difficult to express in words. But, they are not the vacuities of a mind sunken into a confused state of unconscious ecstasy, such as that induced through the use of mind-altering drugs. More truly, they are the most pure and subtle spiritual attainments of a mind perfected by moral and intellectual training, which make it apt and fit for the realization of the most excellent,

tranquil states on the path leading to *nibbāna*. Hence, in Buddhism, they are called "the tranquil abodes", or "the peaceful abidings" (*santā ete vihārā ariyassa vinaye vuccanti*) (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 41).

The four formless states are also called "*sambhādhe okāsādhigama*", "the attainment of release from the trouble of material form", which was realized by the *Buddha*, "for the purification of beings, for passing beyond grief and sorrow, for the ending of pain and misery, for the attainment of the right fruit of knowledge, and for the realization of the eternal peace of *nibbāna*" (*Anguttara Nikāya* IV, 426). ■

PART THREE

Vipassanā Meditation

25

Vipassanā Bhāvanā

As has already been stated,[140] Buddhist meditation includes two complex systems: (1) *samādhi bhāvanā*,[141] the development, or cultivation, of concentration (*samādhi*) and (2) *vipassanā bhāvanā*, the development of insight (*vipassanā*). Chapters 13—24 of this book describe the various methods and practices set forth in the scriptures that make the achievement of concentration possible. But, concentration is the result attained by mental discipline (*bhāvanā*) that is still acting upon the surface level of our consciousness and cannot, by itself, cope with the residual dispositions of the mind, or taints (*āsava*), nor can it dispel ignorance (*avijjā*) and uproot the causes of suffering (*dukkha*).

The whole being of man must awaken, must rise up and fight against the worldly dispositions and lower tendencies of the mind that impede its higher progress. The distinction between mind and body, matter and spirit, which is necessary for final liberation (*vimokkha*), can only result from the infinite expansion of the intellectual faculties and powers latent in human beings. All expansion comes through methodical exercise and regular control of the physical and mental sides of human life. The *samādhi* system of meditation is intended to provide this foundation, which is of vital importance to the practice of insight. It promotes the regulated exercise of the body and of its vital processes and the methodical control of the mind, together with the gradual growth of insight, for they are indispensible preliminaries to the perfect spiritual development of *paññā*, "wisdom", or "full knowledge". The physical, moral, and intellectual sides of life must be developed together, so that all-around progress can be made. Hence, disciples who have disciplined themselves in accordance with the moral principles (*sīla*) and have attained the habit of concentration through *samādhi* meditation, must acquire wisdom (*paññā*) through the development of insight (*vipassanā*). As stated in the scriptures (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 76; *Majjhima Nikāya* II, 17):

> *"With his mind thus concentrated, purified, cleansed, and spotless, with the defilements gone, supple, ready to act, firm, and impassable, he directs his mind to the knowledge of insight. He thus understands: 'This is my body, having shape, composed of the four elements, produced by a mother and a father, a collection of nutriments, subject to change, pounding, breaking, and dissolving; this consciousness of mine is resting on this body, to this it is bound…'."*

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[140] See Chapter 1 of this book for details.

[141] This is also known as "*samatha bhāvanā*", "the development of tranquility, or calm-abiding".

In this passage, *vipassanā* is given, under the name *ñāṇadassana*, "knowledge of insight", with reference to the body and mind, as the entrance to the Noble Path (*ariya-magga*) for those disciples who achieved mental purity (*citta-visuddhi*) through the attainment of the absorptions (*jhāna*) during the practice of *samādhi* meditation.

In the beginning, there are two paths to liberation: (1) the path of tranquility (*samathayāna*) and (2) the path of insight (*vipassanāyāna*). These two correspond to the two kinds of individuals: (1) those who are of a passionate disposition (*taṇhā-carita*) and (2) those who are of a skeptical disposition (*diṭṭhi-carita*). The former type attains Arahatship through *vipassanā* preceded by *samatha*, and the latter through *samatha* preceded by *vipassanā* (*Nettippakaraṇa*,[142] p. 7).

Again, these two paths correspond to the two faculties faith (*saddhā*) and wisdom (*paññā*). Those who have entered into the religious life through strong faith are trained in the *samādhi* path. Practicing various subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), experiencing psychic powers, they enter, in the end, the *vipassanā* path with a view to the acquisition of full knowledge (*paññā*), which leads to Arahatship.

There are others of a decidedly philosophical temperament, in whom intellect is the dominant factor. When such persons enter the religious life, they are, from the very beginning, trained in the *vipassanā* path. Concentrating and purifying the mind with the power of insight, they achieve full knowledge and directly attain the goal of Arahatship. The *samādhi* system, therefore, seems to be optional, and it is regarded in Buddhism as only a discipline preparatory to the attainment of full knowledge. But, *vipassanā*, being the direct path to full knowledge, is indispensable and universally imperative for the attainment of *nibbāna*, and is regarded in Buddhist teaching as a unique system.

In relation to the gradual development in the threefold training, the practice of insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*) is explained in the *Visuddhimagga* under the heading "*paññā bhāvanā*", "the development of full knowledge", and is the last item of a disciple's training.

There is no one word in English that satisfactorily conveys the full meaning of the Pāḷi term "*paññā*". It means the essential knowledge required to grasp the fundamental truths and is here rendered "full knowledge". When the term "*paññā*" used in relation to *vipassanā*, it is translated "wisdom", that is, "supreme wisdom", "insight", or "intuitive knowledge". The following questions and answers are put forth in the *Visuddhimagga* to explain *paññā*:

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[142] The *Nettippakaraṇa*, which is a non-canonical text that serves as a handbook for the interpretation of the Pāḷi Canon, has not yet received the attention it deserves. As noted by Bond: "Of all the works … in the early Pāḷi literature, the *Nettippakaraṇa* is probably one of the least read and least understood." The understanding of the *Nettippakaraṇa* is, indeed, difficult, in spite of the excellent and ground-breaking translation by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli. The word *nettī*, which occurs already in canonical Pāḷi, means "guide". The text of the *Nettippakaraṇa* seems to have been composed for the purpose of systematically developing methods for an interpretation of the *Tipiṭaka*. Thus, it may have been a manual for commentators, although the possible influence of the *Nettippakaraṇa* on the composition of the *Aṭṭhakathā* has not been sufficiently investigated.

1. What is *paññā*? It is insight knowledge associated with pure thought.

2. In what sense is it *paññā*? It is *paññā* in the sense of "understanding in many ways" (*pajānanā*). It surpasses perception (*saññā*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) in knowing an object in all respects and reaching the path of deliverance. Perception only perceives an object in its color, shape, and form, but it is unable to understand its intrinsic nature (*sabhāva*). Consciousness, corresponding here to "intellect", can understand an object in its color, shape, and form, and also its intrinsic nature, but it cannot reach the manifestation of the path. Full knowledge (*paññā*) knows the object, knows its intrinsic nature, or characteristics, and reaches the path. Hence it is said: *Pajānana-aṭṭhena paññā*, that is, "it is super-understanding, or understanding in many ways (*pajānanā*), that is full knowledge (*paññā*)" (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 292).

   Here, intuitive knowledge (*paññā*) is direct, immediate, and non-relative. In this respect, it differs greatly from the other two states, perception (*saññā*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*), which are preliminary, indirect, slow, and relative. They always proceed through relation and study reality from a distance, they divide reality into artificial segments, and they deal with concepts, or ideas. Hence, intuitive knowledge (*paññā*) is not necessarily found where perception and consciousness are present. But, where intuitive knowledge is present, it is not to be distinguished from those two states, because it is not possible to distinguish these mental states when they occur in a single process. The *Buddha*, through His perfect enlightenment, has, accordingly, declared the unity of these mental states when they occur in one object (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 293).

   > *"Wisdom and consciousness, friend — these states are conjoined, not disjoined, and it is impossible to separate each of these states from the other in order to describe and differentiate between them."*

3. What are the characteristics, essence, manifestation, and proximate cause of *paññā*? Its characteristic is penetrating into the true nature of things. Its essence, or function, is dispelling the darkness of ignorance. Not being bewildered is its manifestation. Concentration is its proximate cause — as has been said: "He who is concentrated knows, sees things as they are" (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* III, 13).

4. How many kinds of *paññā* are there? It is of one kind in its characteristic of penetration into the true nature of phenomena. It is of two kinds as: (1) mundane (*lokiya*) and (2) supramundane (*lokuttara*). Likewise, it is of two kinds as: (1) with taints (*āsava*) and (2) without taints; discriminating between (1) mind (*citta*) and (2) matter (*rūpa*); associated (1) with happiness (*sukha*), (2) with equanimity (*upekkhā*); based upon (1) insight (*vipassanā*) and (2) culture. It is of three kinds as: being achieved (1) by reasoning, (2) by learning, and (3) by meditation; likewise by way of (1) limitation, (2) sublimity, and (3) infinitude. It is of four

kinds as: by way of knowledge of the Four Noble Truths and by way of the four analyses, that is, the four *paṭisambhidās*, namely, the analytical knowledge (1) of meaning (*attha*), (2) of doctrine (*dhamma*), (3) of language (*nirutti*), and (4) of ready wit, or understanding (of the first three kinds of analytical knowledge) (*paṭibhāna*).

5. How should *paññā* be developed? The answer to this question explains that *paññā* is to be developed with a thorough understanding of the doctrines of: (1) the five aggregates of existence (*khandha*); (2) the twelve bases (*āyatana*), that is, the six sense organs and their corresponding objects; (3) the eighteen elements (*dhātu*), that is, the six sense organs, the six sense objects, and the six kinds of consciousness; (4) the twenty-two faculties (*indriya*), that is, the six senses, femininity, masculinity, life, happiness, unhappiness, pleasure, pain, equanimity, faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom, and the three faculties of the attainment of paths and the fruits; (5) the Four Noble Truths (*ariya-sacca*); and (6) the twelve links (*nidāna*) of dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*). Having studied these doctrines, which are the ground of *paññā*, disciples should fulfill moral and mental purification, which are the roots of *paññā*. Having fulfilled them, they should develop *paññā* through the acquisition of the fivefold purification of insight[143] which is said to be its "body".

6. What are the advantages of developing *paññā*? In brief, the destruction of the taints (*āsava*), the enjoyment of the essence of the Noble Path (*ariya-magga*), the attainment of the entire cessation of thoughts and feelings, and the final release from all the miseries of existence.

It is through this catechism that the *Visuddhimagga* lays out in great detail the system of religious training in full knowledge (*paññā*), covering the whole field of the Buddhist doctrine of self-enlightenment. The cardinal principles being taken as a compendium of the whole system, it is described in the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*[144] under the heading "*vipassanā-kammaṭṭhāna*", "the method for developing insight". There, it contains: (1) the seven stages of purification; (2) the three characteristic marks; (3) the three contemplations; (4) the ten insight knowledges; (5) the three stages of emancipation; and (6) the three entrances of emancipation. The remaining chapters of this book will deal with these practices, which constitute the developments of *vipassanā* meditation as the direct path to the happiness of *nibbāna*. ■

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[143] (1) Purification of view (*diṭṭhi-visuddhi*); (2) purification by overcoming doubt (*kankhā-vitaraṇa-visuddhi*); (3) purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path (*maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*); (4) purification by knowledge and vision of the way (*paṭipadā-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*); and (5) purification by knowledge and vision (*ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*).

[144] Specifically, Chapter 9 of the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*. An excellent translation and accompanying commentary of the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha* is available from Pariyatti Publications, Seattle, WA (2000) (http://www.pariyatti.com). A Charleston Buddhist Fellowship edition (2007) is also available.

26

Vipassanā and the Three Characteristic Marks

Disciples of insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*) are required, even in the preliminary stage, to possess a thorough understanding of the characteristics (*lakkhaṇa*) of phenomenal existence. If they are to proceed to further development, this is an essential part of the meditation exercise. There are three characteristics that mark all animate organisms and inanimate objects in the universe, indeed, all conditioned things without exception. In Buddhism, these characteristics are: (1) *anicca*, "impermanence", or "transitoriness"; (2) *dukkha*, "suffering", or "unsatisfactoriness"; and (3) *anattā*, "non-self", "selflessness", or "soullessness". These characteristics are logically explained and carefully molded into a definite system, for, not only do they form a doctrine that is found in Buddhism alone, but, when fully realized, they become the very basis of supreme enlightenment.

When used as technical terms, these words signify the salient characteristics of every form and grade of existence, mental or material, earthly or divine — that is, everything that may be considered to be compounded (*saṁkhata*). Further, they are themselves interrelated through the law of causality, or, briefly, to express their logical connection, we may say: "Everything is transient. Everything that is transient is painful. Everything that is transient and painful is not-self." Hence, the statement: "What is transient (*yad aniccaṁ*), that is painful (*taṁ dukkhaṁ*); what is painful (*yaṁ dukkhaṁ*), that is soulless (*tad anattā*); what is soulless (*yad anattā*), that is not 'mine', not 'I am', not 'my self'. Thus, it is to be realized as it is (*yathā bhūtaṁ*), by right understanding (*sammā diṭṭhi*)." (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* III, 22.) As stated in the *Dhammapada* (verses 277—279):

> *"All compound things are impermanent; those who realize this through insight-wisdom*[145] *are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to purity.*[146]
>
> *"All compound things have suffering as their nature; those who realize this through insight-wisdom are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to purity.*

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[145] *Paññā* is translated here as "insight-wisdom" (*vipassanā paññā*).
[146] That is, to the purification of the mind.

> *"All states are without self;*[147] *those who realize this through insight-wisdom are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to purity."*

Anicca-Lakkhaṇa

The word *anicca*, usually rendered "impermanent" in English, is generally applied to the five aggregates (*khandha*) of phenomenal existence, while the word "*lakkhaṇa*" implies their "characteristic" of transitoriness, which is threefold, as described in the following verse (*Anguttara Nikāya* I, 152):

> *"Monks, there are three characteristics of phenomena (saṁkhata-lakkhaṇa), three signs of phenomena (saṁkhata-nimitta). What are these three? There appears rising, there appears ceasing, and, in that which exists, there appears change."*

This statement embraces the three fundamental attributes of threefold existence, physical, mental, and psychophysical, and includes the whole meaning implied in *anicca*, "impermanence". Considered philosophically, it reveals that there is no being, there is only becoming — becoming to rise (*uppāda*), becoming to fall (*vaya*), and becoming to change (*aññathatta*). Hence, every individual or thing is unstable, temporary, and doomed to pass away. They may last for a short or a long period of time, since they are conditioned by different causes, but, in every case, where there is a beginning, there is also an end. When applied to a sentient organism, this becoming is a compound (*saṁkhata*) of two principles, mind (*nāma*) and matter (*rūpa*). Every person or thing, all mental and physical phenomena, is, therefore, an aggregation, "a mere heap (*puñja*) of compounds (*suddha sankhārapuñjo*)".

What an ordinary, uninstructed worldling (*puthujjana*) regards as an individual, or a person, is, in reality, the relation of its component parts to one another, and this is ever changing, never remaining the same for two consecutive moments. The occurrence of such a combination of mental and physical qualities, existing as one individual distinct from his or her surroundings, is known, conventionally, as "*satta*", "a being", "*puggala*", "an individual", or *jīva*, "a living being". This individual, who seems to exist, is really the succession of the three phases of birth, growth, and death, followed, yet again, by

[147] Impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and soullessness (*anattā*) are the three characteristics of all things conditioned by causes (*saṁkhārā*). It is by contemplating these three characteristics that one realizes *nibbāna*. A meditator may concentrate on any characteristic that appeals to him or her most.

Anattā, that is, "soullessness, selflessness, or essencelessness", is the crux of Buddhism. The term *saṁkhāra* "compound", which is applied to any conditioned thing, is used in the two previous verses (nos. 277 and 278), while, in the third verse (no. 279), the term *dhamma* is used in order to show that everything, including the unconditioned *nibbāna*, is without self existence. *Nibbāna* is not included in *saṁkhāra*. It is neither transitory nor sorrowful. *Dhamma* embraces both the conditioned and the unconditioned. *Nibbāna* is, and it is essenceless.

birth, growth, and death. The appearance, in one form of existence, is termed "*uppāda*", "rise", or "birth", and the complete change into another is termed "*vaya*", "fall", or "passing away". The period between these two is filled by a succession of momentary changes. That which is visible, that which forms the true nature of this existence of individuality, are these three states, birth, life, and passing away. Actually, therefore, there is nothing but continuous change, which is termed "*anicca*", in the sense of "passing away" (*aniccaṁ khayaṭṭhena*). Hence, it is said (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* I, 158):

> *"Impermanent, indeed, are all conditioned things; their nature is to rise and pass away. When they have arisen, then again, they cease. Happiness lies in subduing them."*

Dukkha-Lakkhaṇa

Briefly, we may say that *dukkha* is applied to the five aggregates of clinging (*khandha*), or, in the words of the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (The Turning of the Wheel of the *Dhamma*) (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* II, 1), "In brief, the five aggregates of clinging (*upādānakkhandha*) are suffering (*dukkha*)." In the process of individual becoming, the five aggregates, namely, corporeality (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), (predisposing) mental formations (*saṁkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*), become manifest in various forms according to the law of causality.

Rūpakkhandha

Of these aggregates, corporeality (*rūpa*), or body, implies the material form, or the objective aspect of a living organism and consists of twenty-eight factors:

1. The four elements;
2. The five physical senses;
3. The five physical sense objects;
4. The faculty of gender (male and female);
5. The heart base;
6. The vital force;
7. The nutritive essence.

These eighteen (4+5+5+1+1+1+1 = 18) are corporeality (*rūpa*), body, or materiality, that is, material substances that manifest in their own nature (*attano sabhāvena siddhaṁ*), possessing the salient characteristics (*lakkhaṇa*) of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and selflessness (*anattā*) (*aniccādi lakkhaṇa sahitaṁ*), produced by *kamma* and environment (*kammādi pacceyehi nipphāditaṁ*), with a mutable nature (*ruppana sabhāvena yuttaṁ*), and they are objects for contemplation (*sammasana rūpa*).

8. The material quality of limitation, that is, the space between two substances;
9. The material quality of communication by means of body and speech;
10. The material quality of plasticity, that is, lightness, pliancy, and fitness for action;
11. The material quality of birth (*upacaya*), continuity (*santati*), growth (*jaratā*), and decay (*aniccatā*).

These ten (1+2+3+4 = 10) are *rūpa* in the sense of material qualities derived from matter. When taken together with the preceding eighteen qualities, they are called *rūpakkhandha*, "the group, or aggregate (*khandha*), of corporeality (*rūpa*), body, or materiality".

Rūpa, in its more special sense, is a visible form, a shape, a colored surface, etc., that is, any object that can be perceived by the eyes. More generally, *rūpa* refers to these twenty-eight material qualities, both within and outside an individual, and it is through the movements and changes of these qualities that an individual becomes aware and receives mental impressions. These material qualities are called *rūpa* in the sense of "*ruppati*", "to change", or "to decay", under the influence of various physical conditions such as heat and cold. To quote the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (III, 86):

> *"Why, Monks, do you say 'rūpa'? Because it is affected (ruppati) by cold and heat, by hunger and thirst, by the bites of gnats, mosquitoes, and reptiles, by wind and sun."*

Thus, the term "*rūpa*" is used to denote a living organism, or a material, or corporeal, aggregate, or simply a body (*kāya*), by referring to its salient characteristic (*lakkhaṇa*), that of mutability, change, or impermanence (*anicca*). Because it is mutable, ever-changing, impermanent, there arises fear (*bhaya*) of suffering, pain, and sorrow. It is therefore termed "*dukkha*" in the sense of being a source of danger and a cause of suffering and fear.

Vedanākkhandha

Vedanā, in the sense of "feeling", or "sensation", comprises the subjective states, whether pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, that are produced by contact between the senses and sense objects. As has been said (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* III, 86):

> *"Why, Monks, do you say 'vedanā'? Vedanā is that which is felt. And what is felt? Pleasant, unpleasant, and also neutral feeling. Each is felt. Therefore, you say 'feeling'."*

There are five kinds of *vedanā*: (1) bodily agreeable feeling (*kāyikā sukhā-vedanā = sukha*); (2) bodily disagreeable feeling (*kāyikā dukkhā-vedanā = dukkha*); (3) mentally agreeable feeling (*cetasikā sukhā-vedanā = somanassa*); (4) mentally disagreeable feeling (*cetasikā dukkhā-vedanā = domanassa*); and (5) indifferent, or neutral, feeling (*adukkha-m-asukhā vedanā = upekkhā*). Of these five, that which is

associated with the body and is the result of good and agreeable conditions is pleasant. That which is associated with bad and disagreeable conditions is painful. The feeling associated with moral states of consciousness is joyful, but that associated with such states as anger, hate, dislike, sorrow, lamentation, despair, etc. is sad. That which is associated with such mental states as equanimity, balance, tranquility, disinterestedness, is neutral, that is, neither pleasant nor unpleasant. When everything that has the characteristic of feeling is taken together, it is known as the "aggregate of feeling" (*vedanākkhandha*). It is *dukkha* because of its mutability, infelicity, and momentariness.

Saññākkhandha

Here, *saññā*, in the sense of "perception", includes everything that has the characteristic of perceiving. It is related to the senses and is of six kinds: the five sense perceptions and the perception of mental objects. The characteristic of perception itself is perceiving as shown in the following (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* III, 87):

> *"Why, Monks, do you say saññā? Because it perceives. And what does it perceive? It perceives blue, green, yellow, red, white."* (This refers only to form-perception.)

Saññā, as the cognitive assimilation of sense perceptions by way of perceiving and of ideas by way of naming, or distinguishing, is associated with all states of consciousness. Therefore, the varieties of perception are as many as those of consciousness. When taken together, they are called the "aggregate of perception" (*saññākkhandha*). Its outstanding characteristic being the same as feeling (*vedanā*), it should be recognized as *dukkha*.

Saṁkhārakkhandha

Saṁkhārakkhandha is best rendered as the aggregate of "(predisposing) mental formations". It embraces everything that has the characteristic of "bringing about", in collections, or groups.

The (predisposing) mental formations (*saṁkhāra*) are defined thus (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* III, 87):

> *"Why, Monks, do you say saṁkhāra? Because they compose or collect together (abhisaṁkharonti) what is compounded (saṁkhata). And what is the compound that they compose? They compose the material body as a compound of matter (rūpa). They compose feeling as a compound of feeling (vedanā). They compose perceptions as a compound of perception (saññā). They compose (predisposing) mental formations as a compound of mental formations (saṁkhāra). They compose consciousness as a compound of consciousness (viññāṇa). [Thus] they compose a compound. Therefore, Monks, the term 'saṁkhāra'."*

Saṁkhāra is elaborated upon in the *Abhidhamma* (*Dhammasanganī* 62, etc.), where it is applied to *cetanā*, "volition", "will", or the "mental faculty of action", for, in the *suttanta* teaching, it is defined under the name "*rūpa-sañcetanā*", "*cetanā*", or "the will to see", etc. (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* III, 60). Here, *cetanā* includes all other mental factors (*cetasika*) that are responsible for the active, passive, and receptive phases of consciousness. As shown in the *Dhammasanganī*, there are fifty-two *cetasikas*, fifty[148] of which are included among the (predisposing) mental formations (*saṁkhāra*). A detailed exposition of them is given in the *Visuddhimagga* (pp. 463—473), where they are divided into three kinds: (1) wholesome (*kusala*); (2) unwholesome (*akusala*); and (3) neutral (*avyākata*). Those which are associated with the wholesome consciousness of three planes (*kāma*, *rūpa*, and *arūpa*, "sensory", "form, or fine material", and "formless, or immaterial", respectively) are moral. Those associated with the unwholesome consciousness of the sensory plane (*kāmāvacara*) are immoral, while those associated with the neutral states of consciousness (that is, neither wholesome nor unwholesome) are indeterminate. Of these states, those which accumulate *kamma* are termed "volition" (*cetanā*); note, for example (*Anguttara Nikāya* III, 415): "Volition, Monks, I declare is *kamma*." They are *dukkha*, since they are the cause of existence in the world of change.

Viññāṇakkhandha

The sum total of all that has the characteristic of cognizing is *viññāṇakkhandha*, "the aggregate of consciousness". *Viññāṇa* is here applied to all states of consciousness in the sense of "awareness" of various objects. *Viññāṇakkhandha* differs from *saññā*, or the aggregate of "perception", in possessing the characteristic of knowing its object with deeper understanding than that of merely perceiving or recognizing what is felt through the senses. Hence, the saying (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* III, 87):

> *"Why, Monks, do you say viññāṇa? It cognizes or is conscious (vijānāti). Therefore, it is called viññāṇa."*

Here, *vi-jānāti*, "to know thoroughly or specially", is deeper than *saṁ-jānāti*, which is implied in *saññā*. Strictly speaking, however, feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), (predisposing) mental formations (*saṁkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) are inseparable parts of the same process. But, they differ from one another in their individual characteristics of feeling, perceiving, composing, and cognizing, so that they are distinguished as four separate aggregates (*khandha*). When these aggregates are judged according to their psychological value, feeling and perception are seen to be passive and receptive coefficients of consciousness, while the (predisposing) mental formations are its active states. *Viññāṇa* is their leader, being the original cause without which they do not appear. In view of this causal relation, *viññāṇa* is applied to *citta*,

[148] Feeling (*vedanā*) and perception (*saññā*) are excluded.

"mind", and the others are *cetasika*, "mental factors", that is, its concomitants, or properties. Thus, *viññāṇa* is the essential part which involves the other three mental aggregates, and, for the purpose of analyzing the main phases of consciousness and of showing the objective relation of various conceptions of individuality, they are logically distinguished by their characteristics as four aggregates, in the sense of groups (*khandha*), or collections (*rāsi*).

These five divisions of mental and material aggregates include all conditions of physical and mental existence in the universe, together with that which forms the conception of individuality. The scriptures explain that these aggregates are of two kinds: (1) the aggregates just described in the sense of *khandhas*, or "collections", and (2) the aggregates that are the objects of *upādāna*, "grasping by clinging to, or hankering after". As stated in the *Anguttara Nikāya* (IV, 47f.):

> *"Monks, I will explain to you [the difference between] the five aggregates and the five aggregates of grasping… Whatever form is past, present, or future, external or internal, gross or subtle, higher or lower, near or far, this, Monks, is the aggregate of form. Whatever feeling is past, present, or future, external or internal, gross or subtle, higher or lower, near or far, this, Monks, is the aggregate of feeling. Whatever perception is past, present, or future, external or internal, gross or subtle, higher or lower, near or far, this, Monks, is the aggregate of perception. Whatever mental formations are past, present, or future, external or internal, gross or subtle, higher or lower, near or far, these, Monks, are the aggregate of mental formations. Whatever consciousness is past, present, or future, external or internal, gross or subtle, higher or lower, near or far, this, Monks, is the aggregate of consciousness. Monks, these are called the 'five aggregates'.*
>
> *"Monks, what are the five aggregates of grasping? Monks, whatever form is past, present, or future, external or internal, gross or subtle, higher or lower, near or far, or is the object of the taints, [the object] of grasping, this, Monks, is called the 'form aggregate of grasping'. Monks, whatever feeling is past, present, or future, external or internal, gross or subtle, higher or lower, near or far, or is the object of the taints, [the object] of grasping, this, Monks, is called the 'feeling aggregate of grasping'. Monks, whatever perception is past, present, or future, external or internal, gross or subtle, higher or lower, near or far, or is the object of the taints, [the object] of grasping, this, Monks, is called the 'perception aggregate of grasping'. Monks, whatever mental formations are past, present, or future, external or internal, gross or subtle, higher or lower, near or far, or are the object of the taints, [the object] of grasping, these, Monks, are called the 'mental formations aggregate of grasping'. Monks, whatever consciousness is past, present, or future, external or internal, gross or subtle, higher or lower, near or far, or is the object of the taints, [the object] of grasping, this, Monks, is called the 'consciousness aggregate of grasping'. Monks, these are called the 'five aggregates of grasping'."*

Herein, when the five aggregates are associated with the taints (*āsava*), they are known as "*upādānakkhandha*", "aggregates of grasping, or clinging". They are the causes of *dukkha*, "sorrow, pain, suffering, misery, woe", being the objects through which the ordinary, uninstructed worldling (*puthujjana*) entertains such erroneous conceptions as "I am this", "this is mine", etc. It is with reference to the existence of these five objects that all erroneous views concerning the "soul theory" have been, or are, or will be entertained by mankind. To quote the scriptures (*Anguttara Nikāya* IV, 181f.):

> *"Monks, in the existence of form, a wrong view arises. Through grasping form, through depending upon form, a wrong view arises, namely, 'I am this', 'this is mine', 'this is my self'. In the existence of feeling, a wrong view arises. Through grasping feeling, through depending upon feeling, a wrong view arises, namely, 'I am this', 'this is mine', 'this is my self'. In the existence of perception, a wrong view arises. Through grasping perception, through depending upon perception, a wrong view arises, namely, 'I am this', 'this is mine', 'this is my self'. In the existence of mental formations, a wrong view arises. Through grasping mental formations, through depending upon mental formations, a wrong view arises, namely, 'I am this', 'this is mine', 'this is my self'. In the existence of consciousness, a wrong view arises. Through grasping consciousness, through depending upon consciousness, a wrong view arises, namely, 'I am this', 'this is mine', 'this is my self'."*

This is the justification for this division of mind and body into five aggregates, which are the basis and measure of hankering after a self.

Disciples who analyze these five aggregates in the manner explained above, and who realize their characteristics, abandon the distorted view concerning the existence of happiness, or of a permanent self in these states, and, thus, they purge their mind of wrong views and so come to discern the true nature of phenomenal existence.

Anattā-Lakkhaṇa

Although the fact that the five aggregates (*khandha*) are ever changing is so obvious, men and women, under the blind influence of ignorance (*avijjā*), foolishly credit themselves with an abiding, perdurable entity, thinking: "This is who I am. This is mine. This is my self."

Here, *attā*, "self, soul, ego", does not mean the "self" of everyday experience, usually expressed as "oneself", but, rather, it refers to that conception which is held to be of a permanent nature like the *ātman*, "self, soul, ego", of Hindu philosophy or the "soul" of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. According to the *Abhidhānappadīpikā*,[149] the term

[149] The *Abhidhānappadīpikā* is a dictionary of the Pāḷi language.

"*attā*" has the following four meanings: (1) mind; (2) body; (3) nature; and (4) supreme self (*paramattā*).

This "supreme self" (*paramattā*), or "true self", or "soul", an entity thought to be behind all the physical and mental qualities of the individual, is what is meant here by the term "*attā*". That such a thing exists, being identical with any part of the individual, whether material or immaterial, is denied in Buddhism, and this fact must be recognized when considering the characteristic marks of the selfless nature of the five aggregates. In the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta (The Characteristics of Non-self) (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* IX, 4), this doctrine of non-self (*anattā*) is expounded for the first time by the *Buddha*, in the following words:

> *"The body,*[150] *Monks, is soulless.*[151] *If, Monks, there were in [this body] a soul,*[152] *the body would not be subject to suffering. 'Let this body be thus, let this body not be thus.' Such possibilities would also exist. But, inasmuch as this body is soulless, it is subject to suffering, and no possibilities exist for [ordering]: 'Let this body be thus, let this body not be thus.'*
>
> *"In like manner, feelings, perceptions, [predisposing] mental formations, and consciousness*[153] *are soulless.*[154]
>
> *"What do you think, Monks, is this body permanent or impermanent?"*
>
> *"Impermanent,*[155] *Lord."*
>
> *"Is that which is impermanent happy or painful?"*
>
> *"It is painful,*[156] *Lord."*
>
> *"Is it justifiable, then, to think of that which is impermanent, painful, and transitory: 'This is mine; I am this; this is my soul'?"*
>
> *"Certainly not, Lord."*
>
> *"In like manner, Monks, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness are impermanent and painful.*

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[150] *Rūpa* "body, corporeality, corporeal group." The term *rūpa* designates a combination of twenty-eight physical phenomena constituting a temporary unity. Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), p. 175.

[151] *Anattā* (Sanskrit *anātman*) "non-self, non-ego, egolessness, soullessness." The doctrine of *anattā* teaches that, neither within the bodily and mental phenomena of existence, nor outside of them, can there be found anything that, in the ultimate sense, can be regarded as a self-existing real ego-entity, soul, or any other abiding substance. Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), pp. 14—16.

[152] A permanent, unchanging entity created by a God or emanating from a *paramātma* (Divine Essence).

[153] The so-called "being" of these five aggregates. Outside of these five aggregates, there is no being. If the aggregates are removed, nothing remains. A soul does not abide in any one group or in any aggregate, nor in all of them, nor outside of them.

[154] The *Buddha* makes the same assertion as above in connection with each of the remaining four parts of the so-called "being." The *Buddha* raises similar queries with regard to each of the other constituents of being. The translation is abridged here.

[155] *Anicca* "impermanent".

[156] *Dukkha* "painful, sorrowful, suffering, ill, unsatisfactory".

> *"Is it justifiable, then, to think of these which are impermanent, painful, and transitory: 'These are mine; I am these; these are my soul'?"*
>
> *"Certainly not, Lord."*
>
> *"Then, Monks, the whole body, whether past, present, or future, personal or external, coarse or subtle, low or high, far or near, should be understood by right knowledge in its real nature: 'This is not mine; I am not this; this is not my soul.'*
>
> *"All feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness, whether past, present, or future, personal or external, coarse or subtle, low or high, far or near, should be understood by right knowledge in their real nature: 'These are not mine; I am not these; these are not my soul.'*
>
> *"The learned noble disciple who sees thus becomes disgusted with the body, with feelings, with perceptions, with mental formations, and with consciousness; he becomes detached from these abhorrent things and is liberated through detachment. Then, the knowledge dawns on him: 'Emancipated am I.' He understands that rebirth is ended, lived is the holy life, done what should be done, there is no more of this state again."*

This discourse was delivered to the first five disciples of the *Buddha* as a subject of *vipassanā* meditation, which enabled them to attain final release from the taints (*āsava*), for we are told:

> *This the Exalted One said, and the delighted Monks applauded the words of the Exalted One.*
>
> *When the Buddha expounded this teaching, the minds of the group of five Monks were freed of defilements without any attachments.*[157]

Those who believe in the soul theory must necessarily attribute the soul to a part of the whole of the physical or mental constituents of the individual and must regard it as "I, me, mine", or "my soul", "my spirit", "my essence". But, when one realizes the simple fact of the impermanent, ever-changing nature of the five aggregates, that is, of the mind and body, one sees that such beliefs are entirely without foundation.

In this connection, we may recall Saccaka (the Jain), who believed that each of the five aggregates are the self and produced the following argument before the *Buddha*: Saccaka claimed that, just as whatever seeds, plants, or creepers take their root and grow great and abundantly, they all depend upon the earth, have the earth as their ground and support, so, whatever action, whether good or bad, is done by people, they do it with the body as their self, their foundation and support. Likewise with feeling and the other aggregates. Therefore, Saccaka declared that the body is one's self, feeling is one's self, and so on. But, the Buddha replied (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 233): "Friend, you say, 'body is my self', but you do not possess the power to control your body, by saying, 'let my body

[157] That is, they all attained Arahatship.

be thus, let my body not be thus'." At this, Saccaka was silent. When the *Buddha* asked him whether the body, feeling, and the rest were permanent or impermanent, he admitted that they were impermanent. When he was asked whether they were painful or pleasant, he admitted that they were painful. Finally, when he was asked: "Is it fitting or rational to consider what is impermanent, painful, and subject to change as 'this is mine, I am this, this is my self'?" Saccaka replied that it was not.

The Monk Sāti (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 256) believed that consciousness was an abiding entity, which remained as consciousness and, as such, passed from birth to birth. But, the *Buddha* refuted this by citing the law of causality, expounded in the formula of the twelve links (*nidāna*) of dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*).

> *"Consciousness originates from a cause, and, without a cause, there is no consciousness. It manifests itself through each of the six senses. Without them, there is no arising of consciousness. Through whatever cause it arises, it is distinguished by the name of that cause. Through the eye and visible forms, consciousness arises and is known as 'eye-consciousness'."*

A similar statement is made with regard to the consciousness arising from each of the other senses. Thus, *viññāṇa*, "consciousness", with the characteristic of awareness, is only present when the six senses are present. So, it is neither enduring nor permanent.

According to these teachings, when people analyze their visible self, that is, the individual organism, the invisible self, or soul, commonly supposed to be immortal, will disappear. Not one of the constituent parts of their so-called "self" leaves so much as a trace of immortal substance. There is yet another belief that, besides the five aggregates, the self exists not as a separate part of an individual, but that it is the whole essence of an individual. With regard to this and other concepts, the Alagaddūpama Sutta (The Simile of the Snake) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 22 [I, 135]) gives all possible views that have been put forth concerning the self:

> *"There are six views, Monks. What are the six? Herein, an uninstructed ordinary person, who does not pay attention to the Noble Ones, who is not versed in the doctrine of the Noble Ones… (1) looks upon his body as 'this is mine, I am this, this is my self'; (2) looks upon his feelings as 'this is mine, I am this, this is my self'; (3) looks upon his perception as 'this is mine, I am this, this is my self'; (4) looks upon his mental formations as 'this is mine, I am this, this is my self'; (5) looks upon his consciousness as 'this is mine, I am this, this is my self'; (6) looks upon what has been seen, heard, perceived, thought, apprehended, desired, or pursued by his mind as 'this is mine, I am this, this is my self', holding that 'the world is the self, after death I shall become permanent, stable, eternal, and not subject to change, and so I shall stay forever' — he looks upon all as 'this is mine, I am this, this is my self'."*

This shows how the delusion of self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) has been derived from the five aggregates (*khandha*) and has been developed into a more metaphysical concept, which has been erroneously identified as a permanent entity called "self", leading to the theory that "the essence of individuality is the self", "the self is the world", the world and the self are eternal."

The *sutta* proceeds to discuss the problems in detail and bases its refutation of the error upon a more rudimentary analysis of the complexity of mind and matter. It also gives the solution to the question concerning annihilation, to which *nibbāna* is very often, although erroneously, compared. It says that those who hold this delusion of self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) may hear the *Buddha's* teachings, which are directed to the destruction of delusions, to the abandoning of the aggregates, to the giving up of the desire for rebirth, to the eradication of craving, to cessation, and to *nibbāna*, and become alarmed to think that they will be cut off and annihilated. However, those who do not entertain the delusion "this is mine", "I am this", "this is myself", never think whether they will be annihilated or not, and do not lament. If there were a self (*attā*), there would be something belonging to that self. But, inasmuch as neither the self nor anything belonging to a self exist in reality, there is no annihilation in attaining to *nibbāna*, which is actually the complete release from the bondage of that delusion. This view that there is a self, that self is eternal, that the world is self, that the world is eternal, is a fetter (*saṁyojana*) which binds the mind to craving (*taṇhā*) and is entirely the outcome of ignorance (*avijjā*). The Alagaddūpama Sutta (The Simile of the Snake) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 22 [I, 140]) continues:

> *"If anyone criticizes the Tathāgata, saying that the Tathāgata teaches the annihilation, destruction, and non-existence of an existing being, the Tathāgata does not feel anger, displeasure, or disturbance of mind. In the past and now, the Tathāgata teaches suffering and the cessation of suffering. Therein, if others abuse, revile, and try to annoy the Tathāgata, the Tathāgata does not feel anger, displeasure, or disturbance of mind. And, if others honor the Tathāgata, revere, honor, exalt, and worship the Tathāgata, the Tathāgata does not, on that account, feel joy, pleasure, or exaltation of mind."*

The *sutta* concludes by saying:

> *"Monks, put away that which is not yours. And what is not yours? The body… feelings… perception… (predisposing) mental formations… consciousness… These are not yours. Put them away. Putting them away brings you benefit and happiness."*

Disciples who thus examine the nature of the material and mental aggregates (*khandha*) of the individual organism, in the light of the teachings of the *Buddha*, come to discern their salient characteristics of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). This discernment purges their mind of all delusions (*moha*) in regard

to their so-called "self" and the entire universe of psychophysical phenomena, and this purification of views (*diṭṭhi-visuddhi*) forms the path leading to the absolute purity of *nibbāna*.

These facts are summed up in the following verses from the *Dhammapada* (verses 277—279) (see above):

> *"All compound things (sabbe saṁkhārā) are impermanent (anicca); those who realize this through insight-wisdom (vipassanā) are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to purity (visuddhi).*
>
> *"All compound things have suffering (dukkha) as their nature; those who realize this through insight-wisdom are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to purity.*
>
> *"All states (sabbe dhammā) are without self (anattā); those who realize this through insight-wisdom are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to purity."* ■

27

Vipassanā and Satta Visuddhi

The purification of mind and knowledge, which culminates in the attainment of *nibbāna*, the absolute purity (*parama visuddhi*), is outlined in the Rathavinīta Sutta (The Relay Chariots) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 24 [I, 24]). In this discourse, Venerable Puṇṇa Mantāṇiputta explains to Venerable Sāriputta that the goal of the holy life, final *nibbāna*, is to be reached by means of the seven stages of purification (*satta visuddhi*). These stages of purification, however, are not elaborated upon in this discourse, nor are they mentioned anywhere else in the *Buddha's* discourses. The main source for uncovering their precise meaning is the *Visuddhimagga*, literally, "*The Path of Purification*". The *Visuddhimagga* is a detailed commentary on the teachings of the *Buddha*. It was written by Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, a fifth-century Monk (*Bhikkhu*) who lived in Śri Lanka. The stages of purification are also briefly described in the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*, which was written by Ācariya Anuruddha and which is the main primer in Theravādin Buddhism for understanding the *Abhidhamma*, the systematic analysis of ultimate realities. This analysis thoroughly describes the relative and conditional realities of mind and matter, as well as *nibbāna*, the absolute and unconditioned reality. However, the discussion of the stages of purification in the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha* is merely a review of what is described in the *Visuddhimagga* and contains no further explanation. In the *Visuddhimagga*, the seven stages of purification are cited in the following order:

1. Purification of virtue (*sīla-visuddhi*);
2. Purification of mind (*citta-visuddhi*);
3. Purification of view (*diṭṭhi-visuddhi*);
4. Purification by overcoming doubt (*kankhāvitaraṇa-visuddhi*);
5. Purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path (*maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*);
6. Purification by knowledge and vision of the way (*paṭipadā-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*);
7. Purification by knowledge and vision (*ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*).

Insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*) is an independent scheme of training in full knowledge (*paññā*), which is based upon these seven principles, and the mental exercises dealing with them form the whole system of its development. Each of these principles purifies the body, mind, and thoughts in a gradual process and leads to the

higher progress of insight. The *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*, therefore, takes them as the subjects (*kammaṭṭhāna*) of insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*), so that they are the bases of contemplative exercise.

According to the *Visuddhimagga*, purification of virtue (*sīla-visuddhi*) and purification of mind (*citta-visuddhi*), which are the roots of full knowledge, should be fulfilled by disciples who already possess a thorough understanding of the fundamental teachings that are described as the plane (*bhūmi*) of full knowledge.

Purification of Virtue

The four kinds of purified virtue referred to here are explained with reference to the life of a *Bhikkhu*,[158] a Buddhist Monk. Purification of virtue (*sīla-visuddhi*) means the well purified fourfold moral conduct: (1) the *Pātimokkha*-restraint; (2) restraint of the senses; (3) purification of livelihood; and (4) purification of conduct regarding the requisites of life.

Virtue regarding restraint according to the *Pātimokkha*: The *Pātimokkha* is the code of fundamental disciplinary rules binding upon a *Bhikkhu*. For Theravādin Monks, this code consists of 227 rules of varying degrees of gravity. *Bhikkhunīs* (Buddhist Nuns) must follow an additional set of rules. Perfect adherence to the rules laid down in the *Pātimokkha* is called "virtue regarding restraint according to the *Pātimokkha*".

Virtue regarding restraint of the sense faculties: This virtue requires the exercise of mindfulness whenever one encounters sense objects, not allowing the mind to be swayed by attraction towards pleasant objects or repulsion towards unpleasant objects.

Virtue consisting in purity of livelihood: This virtue deals with the manner in which a *Bhikkhu* acquires the necessities of life. He should not acquire his requisites in a manner unbecoming for a Monk, inasmuch as he has dedicated his life to purity and honesty.

Virtue connected with the use of the requisites: This virtue means that a *Bhikkhu* should only use the four requisites — robes, almsfood, lodging, and medicines — after reflecting upon their proper purpose.[159]

Purification of Mind

Purification of mind (*citta-visuddhi*) consists of the development of the eight absorptions (*jhāna*), together with access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), which have already been described in connection with *samādhi* meditation (Chapters 13—24). Here, it should be understood that disciples of *samathayāna*, "the path of calm abiding", or "the

[158] The same high standards are expected of *Bhikkhunīs* — Buddhist Nuns —, while lay practitioners are expected to adhere to the five precepts and to lead noble and useful lives.

[159] Their purpose is merely to sustain life, to provide shelter, and to maintain health so that a *Bhikkhu* or a *Bhikkhunī* can devote all of his or her time and effort to spiritual development and to serving others.

path of tranquility", acquire mental purity through the attainment of the *jhāna* stages, but disciples of *vipassanāyāna*, "the path of insight", achieve mental purity only by means of access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), also known as "momentary concentration" (*khaṇika-samādhi*).

The Theravādin Buddhist tradition recognizes two different approaches to the development of insight (*vipassanā*). One approach, called the "vehicle of calm-abiding" (*samathayāna*), involves the prior development of tranquility meditation (*samatha bhāvanā*) to the level of either access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) or absorption concentration (*appanā samādhi*) as a basis for developing insight. Disciples who adopt this approach, the *samathayānika* meditators, first attain access concentration or one of the fine material sphere (*rūpāvacara*) or immaterial sphere (*arūpāvacara*) absorptions (*jhāna*). They then turn to the development of insight by analyzing the mental and physical phenomena occurring in the *jhāna* in terms of mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpa*) and in terms of their conditionality, after which they contemplate these factors in terms of the three characteristics of existence: (1) impermanence (*anicca*); (2) suffering (*sukkha*); and (3) not self (*anattā*). Thus, for the *samathayānika* meditators, the prior attainment of access or absorption concentration is regarded as the purification of mind.

The other approach, called the "vehicle of pure insight" (*vipassanāyāna*), does not employ the development of the absorptions as a foundation for developing insight. Instead, meditators, after purifying their morality, enter directly into the mindful contemplation of the changing mental and material processes in their own experience. As this contemplation gains strength and precision, the mind becomes naturally concentrated upon the ever-changing stream of experience with a degree of concentration equal to that of access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). This unwavering fixing of the mind on the mental and material processes in their moment-to-moment immediacy is known as "momentary concentration" (*kaṇika-samādhi*). Because it involves a degree of mental stabilization equal to that of access concentration, this momentary concentration is regarded as the purification of mind for *vipassanāyānika* meditators — those who adopt the vehicle of pure insight. Such meditators are called "dry insight workers" (*sukkha-vipassaka*) because they develop insight without the "moisture" of the *jhānas*.

The remaining five stages of purification form the actual system of the gradual progress of *vipassanā*, which leads to final release. For the sake of clarity and to show the order of their development, we shall discuss them here in brief.

Purification of View

Purification of view (*diṭṭhi-visuddhi*) is the comprehension of mind (*nāma*) and matter (*rūpa*) with their respective characteristics, essence, manifestation, and proximate cause. Disciples who have attained the *jhāna* stages should rise from them, except that of neither perception nor non-perception (*nevasaññā-n'āsaññāyatana*), and consider the *jhāna* factors (*jhānanga*) together with their concomitants in the light of their intrinsic natures. They should then fully comprehend them and distinguish them as *nāma*,

"name", in the sense of bending towards the object. Then, they should regard the thought centers, that is, the heart and brain, along with their basis, which is the material body, as *rūpa*, "form", in the sense of change, or decay. When they thus comprehend the mental and material qualities as *nāma* and *rūpa*, they come to the conclusion that there exists neither man nor woman, neither "I" nor "me" nor "mine" in this aggregation of mind and matter.

Following a more detailed method, disciples of *jhāna* or of pure *vipassanā* should first comprehend the thirty-two principal body parts, together with all their material qualities. After they have comprehended the material qualities of the physical body in terms of the characteristic of impermanence (*anicca*), or transitory nature, it will become clear to them that all mental states originate through the senses and show the tendencies of change derived from their objects. In this way, they purify their conception of individuality by thoroughly analyzing mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa*), beginning with the four elements (*catudhātu*).

This may also be accomplished by contemplating the eighteen elements (*dhātu*): the six senses, the six sense objects, and the six kinds of consciousness that correspond to them — eighteen in all.

Other disciples may do so by contemplating the twelve sense bases (*āyatana*): the six sense organs and the six sense objects. According to this method, disciples determine the elements of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body to be the sense organs of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body. They determine their corresponding objects to be sense bases of form, sound, smell, taste, and touch, respectively. They determine the element of consciousness to be the sense base of mind (*manāyatana*), and the mental concomitants such as contact (*phassa*), feeling (*vedanā*), and perception (*saññā*), to be the bases of thoughts, or mental objects (*dhammāyatana*).

Still other disciples may determine name and form, or mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa*), by contemplating the five aggregates (*khandha*). First, they contemplate the physical body, consisting of: the four primary elements (earth, water, heat, and air), the four subsidiary elements (color, smell, taste, and nutritive essence), the five sense organs, basic matter, gender, the life faculty, and the sound product. They determine these seventeen material qualities to be material form (*rūpa*). They then contemplate the remaining four aggregates — feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), (predisposing) mental formations (*saṁkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) —, which they determine to be mental qualities (*nāma*).

Thus, disciples may determine the twofold division in many ways into name and form of all the states of mental and physical existence and realize that there is no human being, or person, or celestial being, or *brahma*-being apart from mere name and form.

> *"For these are merely names, expressions, turns of speech, designations in common use of the world. One who has gained truth makes use of these terms, indeed, but is not led astray by them."*

Contemplating themselves and the universe in their true nature, disciples put away all conceptions of living being, person, or individual and transcend the confusion arising from such conceptions. They assimilate the meaning of the doctrine taught in many discourses, that there is no being or person beyond the combination of mind and matter, and, thus, they rid their mind of individual limitations. They realize the truth of the following (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* I, 135):

> *"When we find certain things combined,*
> *We speak of a 'chariot' or of a 'cart'.*
> *In like manner, when these five aggregates appear,*
> *We use the designation 'being' (satta)."*

Furthermore (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 190):

> *"Just as, friends, when a space is enclosed by timber and creepers, grass and clay, it is called a 'house', so too, when a space is enclosed by bones and sinews, flesh and skin, it is called 'material form' (rūpa)."*

Thus, when disciples examine each part of the five aggregates, they realize that "beings, persons, I, me, mine, and soul" are just mere words that become the basis of a misconception that causes them to think "I" or "I am". Actually, there are just name and form (*nāma-rūpa*), or, in other words, the mental and physical elements of continuous change. When they comprehend this, their view is called "the correct view of reality", or "seeing things as they really are" (*yathābhūta dassana*). Those who do not discern this reality and cling to the view that a being or individual does, in fact, exist, must admit that such a being is either perishable or imperishable. If they hold that the being is perishable, they must accept the theory of annihilation, for there are no other conclusions to be drawn from such hypotheses. Those who hold that such a being is annihilated after death are carried away to extremes. Those who hold that such a being is eternal foster the desire of becoming or hinder their own liberation from the process of becoming.

Hence, the Blessed One said (*Visuddhimagga* XVIII, 594):

> *"Monks, obsessed by two views, some celestial beings and men sink (olīyanti), some are carried away to extremes (atidhāvanti) — only those who have the eye [of truth] see [the truth as it is]. And how, Monks, do some sink? There are celestial beings and men who delight in becoming, become attached to becoming, revel in becoming. When the doctrine of cessation of becoming is taught, their mind does not respond, takes no interest, is not steady or intent. Thus, Monks, some sink into becoming. And how, Monks, are some carried away to extremes? Oppressed by, ashamed of, disgusted with becoming, some celestial beings and men delight in [imaginary] annihilation, saying, 'When, friends, this self, upon the dissolution of the body, is cut off, annihilated, does not exist after death, that is peace, that is absolute, that is the truth.' Thus, Monks, some run to extremes.*

> *And how, Monks, do those who have the eye [of truth] see [the truth as it is]? Here, Monks, a Monks sees what has become (bhūta, that is, the five aggregates) as such. Seeing the five aggregates as they are, he determines within himself to be disgusted with them, to have no passion for them, to bring them to an end. Thus do those who have the eye see [the truth as it is]."*

Thus, disciples, considering this combination of mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa*), or the five aggregates (*khandha*), reject erroneous conceptions of individuality and become free from attachment to their personality. The acquisition of this real vision of mind and body and their relation to phenomenal existence is summarized as purification of view (*diṭṭhi-visuddhi*).

Purification by Overcoming Doubt

Purification by overcoming doubt (*kankhāvitaraṇa-visuddhi*) is the understanding of the causal relationship between mind (*nāma*) and body (*rūpa*), when grasped in the manner described above. Disciples who wish to fulfill it set forth in search of that which conditions and causes the combination of mind and body, just as a physician seeks to diagnose the origin of a sickness. They begin with the reflection that this combination of mind and body is not without a cause, since it is everywhere conditioned, at all times, in all cases. But, it is not caused by an external creator, for there is no creator, no Issara, Brahmā, or God, beyond mind and body. (There are many reasons for the rejection of a Creator God. It is not necessary to enumerate them here, since they are well-known to most thoughtful people today.[160])

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[160] Buddhism denies the existence of a creator god or supreme being. Moreover, it regards the three major monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) as "impossible religions", false, evil, and harmful. Adherence to these religions is considered "wrong view" (*micchā-diṭṭhi* or simply *diṭṭhi*). For more information, the following works should be consulted: Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (New York, NY, and London: W. W. Norton & Company [2004]) and *Letter to a Christian Nation* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf [2006]); John W. Loftus, *Why I Became an Atheist: A Former Preacher Rejects Christianity* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books [2008]); John W. Loftus (ed.), *The Christian Delusion: Why Faith Fails* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books [2010]); Richard Dawkins, *The GOD Delusion* (Boston, MA, and New York, NY: Houghton-Mifflin [2006]); Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York, NY: Twelve [2007]); Christopher Hitchens (ed.), *The Portable Atheist: Essential Readings for the Nonbeliever* (Philadelphia, PA: Da Capo Press [2007]); Bertrand Russell, *Russell on Religion: Selections from the Writings of Bertrand Russell*, edited by Louis Greenspan and Stefan Andersson (London and New York, NY: Routledge [1999]), and *Bertrand Russell on God and Religion*, edited by Al Seckel (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books [1986]); David Ramsey Steele, *Atheism Explained: From Folly to Philosophy* (Chicago and La Salle, IL: Open Court [2008]); Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, translated by H. L. Mencken (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf [1920 — original German edition 1888]); Victor J. Stenger, *God: The Failed Hypothesis — How Science Shows that God Does Not Exist* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books [2007]) and *Quantum Gods: Creation, Chaos, and the Search for Cosmic Consciousness* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books [2009]); Richard Carrier, *Sense and Goodness without God: A Defense of Metaphysical Naturalism* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse [2005]); Michael Parenti, *God and His Demons* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books

This body is compounded of four elements (*dhātu*), the offspring of a mother and father, supported by food and climate, and it is rooted in ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*taṇhā*), grasping (*upādāna*), and *kamma*. Herein, ignorance, craving, and grasping are the root causes of this body, as the mother is of a child. *Kamma* is the generator, like the father of a child. Food and climate are the supporters, like the nurse of a child.

After disciples have considered the causes and conditions of the existence of the body, they reflect upon the cause of mental states. First, they recollect (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 111—112):

> *"From the cause of the eye and visible object, there arises visual cognition; the unity of the three is contact. Contact begets feelings. What is felt is perceived. What is perceived is contemplated. Thus arise thought processes with reference to visible forms either in the past, or in the present, or in the future."* (The same is repeated for the other senses.)

Next, they recollect (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 8):

> *"As one thus discerns the cause of mind and body, the sixteenfold doubt disappears. That is:*
>
> *"Five concerning the past: 'Did I exist in the past? Did I not exist in the past? What was I then? How was I then? From what did I pass to what?'*
>
> *"Six concerning the present: 'Do I exist now? Do I not exist now? What am I? How am I? Where have I come from? Where shall I go to?'*
>
> *"Five concerning the future: 'Shall I exist in the future? Shall I not exist in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? What, having become what, shall I be in the future?'"*

"Who is the doer of *kamma*?" "Who reaps the fruit?" "Is it a sort of accretion about a soul?" In answering these subtle questions, Venerable Buddhaghosa Thera states in the *Visuddhimagga* (Chapter XIX):

> *Everywhere, in all the realms of existence, the noble disciple sees only mental and corporeal phenomena kept going through the concatenation of causes and effects. No producer of the volitional act, or kamma, does he see apart from the deed, no recipient of the kamma-result apart from the result. Moreover, he is well aware that wise men are merely using conventional language, when, with regard to a*

[2010]); Julian Baggini, *Atheism* (New York, NY, and London: Sterling Publishing [2009]); David Mills, *Atheist Universe: The Thinking Person's Answer to Christian Fundamentalism* (Berkeley, CA: Ulysses Press [2006]); Greg M. Epstein, *Good Without God: What a Billion Nonreligious People Do Believe* (New York, NY: HarperCollins [2009]); S. T. Joshi (ed.), *Atheism: A Reader* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books [2000]); Jack Huberman (ed.), *The Quotable Atheist* (New York, NY: Nation Books [2007]); Carl Sagan, *The Varieties of Scientific Experience: A Personal View of the Search for God*, edited by Ann Druyan (New York, NY: Penguin Press [2006]).

karmic act, they speak of a doer, or with regard to a karmic result, they speak of the recipient of the result.

No doer of the deeds is found,
No one who ever reaps their fruits;
Empty phenomena roll on:
This alone is the correct view.

And while the deeds and their results
Roll on and on, conditioned all,
There is no first cause to be found,
Just as it is with seed and tree ...

No god, no brahmā, can be called
The creator of this wheel of life:
Empty phenomena roll on,
Dependent upon conditions all.

Comprehending the law of *kamma* and its result (*vipāka*), realizing the cause of name and form (*nāma-rūpa*), disciples also put away all doubts belonging to the three phases of time — past, present, and future. They know: Those aggregates (*khandha*) that were born through *kamma* in the past ceased even there. But, a new group of aggregates is born in this existence because of past *kamma*. Yet, there is nothing that has come over to this existence from the past. The aggregates in this existence, born through the result of past *kamma*, will cease here. By the power of present *kamma*, there will be born other aggregates in the next existence. But, there is not a single state that will go over to the future from this.

Or else, they visualize the origin of this group of aggregates of mind and body and put away doubts by meditating upon the formula of the twelve links (*nidāna*) of dependent origination (*paṭicca-samupāda*) as follows (*Udāna*, p. 1; *Saṁyutta Nikāya* II, 1; etc.):

"From the cause of ignorance (avijjā) spring kamma-formations (saṁkhāra); from kamma-formations springs consciousness (viññāṇa); from consciousness spring name (nāma, that is, sensation and perception) and form (rūpa); from name and form spring the six sense organs (saḷāyatana); from the six sense organs springs contact (phassa); from contact springs feeling (vedanā); from feeling springs craving (taṇhā); from craving springs clinging, or grasping (upādāna); from clinging springs becoming (bhava); from becoming springs rebirth (jāti); from rebirth spring old age, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair (jarāmaraṇa). Thus arises, once again, the whole mass of suffering (dukkha)."

Reflecting upon this chain of cause and effect, they think: "If this is, that exists; if this is not, that does not exist." That is to say, through the existence of ignorance, *kamma* formations, or karmic activities,[161] take place. With the extinction of ignorance, *kamma* formations are extinguished. In like manner, through the presence of cause, the effect is present. In the absence of cause, effect is absent. Thus, understanding the law of cause and effect, disciples come to possess the knowledge of reality (*dhammaṭṭhiti-ñāṇa*), which his synonymous with right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*), whereby they comprehend (*Paṭisambhidāmagga* I, 50): "Conditioned by ignorance, karmic activities take place as a result, and both these states are conditioned."

As a consequence of this discernment, all states (*dhamma*[162]) are seen by disciples as impermanent (*anicca*), as the cause of suffering (*dukkha*), and as not self (*anattā*). With this knowledge thus gained by the comprehension of name and form (*nāma-rūpa*), together with their real nature and conditions, they purify their mind from the sixteen kinds of doubt concerning themselves, as explained above, and also from eight kinds of doubt expressed as doubts about: (1) the *Buddha*; (2) the *Dhamma*; (3) the *Sangha*; (4) morality (*sīla*); (5) the method of training; (6) one's previous existence; (7) one's future existence; and (8) the law of causality (*Dhammasangaṇī* 1004).

Thus, the knowledge which, once established, transcends all doubts in the three phases of time, and in all states and conditions, is the achievement described in the phrase "purification by overcoming doubt" (*kankhāvitaraṇa-visuddhi*). Those who are endowed with this knowledge are said to have gained insight (*vipassanā*), realized success, and secured a foothold in the teaching of the *Buddha*. They are assure of liberation and are known as "*Culla Sotāpanna*", "the junior Stream-Winner".

Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What Is the Path and What is not the Path

The knowledge implied in this purification consists of knowing, "this is the path, this is not the path", and disciples who wish to acquire it should first apply themselves to the methodical exercises of insight known as "*kalāpa-sammasana*", "comprehension by groups", that is, the contemplation of mind and body. Disciples should divide them into groups according to their time, position, and duration.

Next, disciples should contemplate again and again the rising and falling, or the waxing and waning (*udaya-vaya*), of things in all three realms of existence, knowing their causal relations and conditions. This is called "*udayabbayānupassanā-ñāṇa*", "the knowledge of rising and passing away". This exercise leads to the continued recognition

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[161] That is, the wholesome and unwholesome volitional acts and their concomitant mental factors which cause rebirth and shape the destiny of beings. These volitional acts become manifest as wholesome or unwholesome actions by body, speech, and mind.

[162] *Dhamma*, "states", as object of mind (*dhammāyatana*, *dhamma-dhātu*, or *dhammārammaṇa*), may be anything, past, present, or future, corporeal or mental, conditioned or unconditioned, real or imaginary. Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), p. 56.

that each moment of consciousness, along with its corresponding object, is impermanent (*anicca*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*), and selfless (*anattā*). Disciples have already been observing these three characteristics, which are inherent to all phenomena, but their ability to identify their presence now encompasses a wider scope of objects and reaches a more profound level of development. These are the methods of *vipassanā* meditation, which will be dealt with when we come to discuss the practical methods of *vipassanā bhāvanā* (Chapter 28).

Those disciples who, in the two previous stages of purification (*visuddhi*), have gained the knowledge of insight (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*), which is also termed "*ñāta-pariññā*", "the full understanding of the known", will acquire, in this stage of purification, the next important knowledge, which is known as "*tīraṇa-pariññā*", "the full understanding as investigating". They achieve this by way of *sammasana*, "investigation, examination, exploration", which finally leads to that knowledge designated as "*pahāna-pariññā*", "the full understanding as overcoming". It is with the second of these three knowledges[163] that the purification concerning the knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path (*maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*) comes to be realized. According to the *Visuddhimagga*, when disciples attain to the knowledge of rising (*udaya*) and falling (*vaya*) of all mental and material qualities, they are said to have achieved what is called "*taruṇa-vipassanā*", "immature, or budding, insight". As they advance in contemplation with this budding state of insight, there arises in them a regular sequence of states: *illumination*, *knowledge*, *zest*, *serenity*, *bliss*, *resolve*, *exaltation*, *mindfulness*, *balance of mind*, and *desire*. These ten phases are termed "*vipassanā-upakkilesa*", "defilements of insight", or "corruptions of insight", for they may "defile", or "corrupt", *vipassanā* and prove detrimental to further progress. Disciples who have practiced the first two kinds of insight — knowledge of (1) rising (*udaya*) and (2) falling (*vaya*) — are liable to fall prey to these defilements, wherein their mind may be seized by spiritual excitement (*dhamma-uddhacca*). For example, on experiencing illumination, they may feel that this constitutes path experience. The manner in which they may fall prey to excitement is described in the following passage (*Paṭisambhidāmagga* II, 100f.):

> *"How is the mind wrongly seized by excitement as to the Dhamma? To him who practices vipassanā, illumination arises. He considers that this illumination is the Dhamma.*[164] *The distraction caused by this [illumination] is excitement. Being obstructed by that excitement, he does not understand that [his vipassanā object] is impermanent, does not understand that it is suffering, does not understand that it is not self. Likewise, to him who practices vipassanā, knowledge arises ... zest arises ... serenity arises ... bliss arises ... resolve arises ... exaltation arises ... mindfulness arises ... balance arises ... desire arises. He considers that this desire is the Dhamma. The distraction caused by this [desire] is excitement. Being obstructed by that excitement, he does not understand that [his vipassanā*

[163] These are explained in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I, 87).
[164] That is, the path.

> *object] is impermanent, does not understand that it is suffering, does not understand that it is not self."*

The word "illumination" (*obhāsa*) means "aura", that is, rays of light emitted from the body on account of the inward illumination of insight. When this illumination appears, meditators may think (*Visuddhimagga* XX, 107): "Never, indeed, has such illumination as this arisen in me before. Surely, I have reached the path; surely, I have reached the fruition." Thus, they take that which is not the path to be the path, and that which is not the fruition to be the fruition. As a result of this mistake, the progress of *vipassanā* is obstructed. Leaving the original subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), they linger in the experience of the illumination, taking delight therein. To some, this illumination appears as a halo, illuminating just their seat. To another, it may be strong enough to illuminate the entire meditation room or the whole of the monastery. For some, it is limited; for others, it radiates one continuous light from the earth even as far as the Akaniṭṭha *brahma*-world. In the case of the *Buddha*, it arose illuminating the ten thousand world systems and had no limit. This illumination often proves deceptive to those who have attained insight through the practice of calm-abiding, or tranquility, meditation (*samatha bhāvanā*). Because of the inactivity of the mental defilements (*kilesa*), which have been suppressed by the power of the absorptions (*jhāna*), such people may think, at that stage, that they are *Arahats*, like the Elder Mahānāga from Uccavālika, whose story is told in the *Visuddhimagga* (XX, 111—113).

The Elder Mahānāga, having attained psychic powers (*abhiññā*), was deluded by the thought that he was an *Arahat*, until his own disciple, Dhammadinna, who was an *Arahat*, made him realize the truth. Dhammadinna, knowing that his teacher was not yet an *Arahat*, went to him and asked a number of questions which Mahānāga, his teacher, answered correctly. Then, Dhammadinna said: "Reverend Sir, your knowledge is very keen. When did you attain this *Dhamma*?" Mahānāga replied, "Sixty years ago, friend." "Reverend Sir, could you demonstrate the power of your concentration?" "Friend, that is not difficult." "Then create an elephant, Reverend Sir." Thereupon, the Elder Mahānāga created an elephant that was all white. "Now, Sir, make this elephant chase you with ears rigid, trunk thrust into mouth, trumpeting furiously," said Dhammadinna. The Elder did so, and, seeing the terrible form of the elephant swiftly approaching, rose from his seat and took flight. Dhammadinna caught him by the robe and said: "Sir, is there such a thing as fear in one who is an *Arahat*, who is free from the taints (*āsava*)?" The Elder, then knowing himself to be an ordinary person (*puthujjana*) and not an *Arahat*, said: "Friend Dhammadinna, be my preceptor," and sat at his feet. "Sir, I have come to be your preceptor, do not be anxious." So saying, Dhammadinna explained a subject of meditation to him.

Mahānāga practiced it and immediately attained Arahatship. This Elder, it is said, had been of an angry disposition and was deceived by "spiritual pride" (*adhimāna*). Such persons are deluded by the illumination (*obhāsa*) of insight. The emancipation from this delusion is included in the knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path (*maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*).

As for the other states, "knowledge" (*ñāṇa*) means the insight knowledge that arises in those who scrutinize the characteristics of mental and material phenomena. It is said to be exceedingly clear and sharp, unfaltering and swift in its penetration. The knowledge of aspects of *Dhamma* that disciples did not fully understand in the past may now become clear to them. The meaning of specific terms, the understanding of how aspects of the path integrate with each other, the comprehension of dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*), and other difficult concepts, may now be easily understood. They may feel that their mind is in accord with their teacher's mind, and the desire to begin teaching may arise. They may even believe that their level of attainment has surpassed that of their teacher, and disagreements with him or her may ensue.

"Zest" (rapture, ecstasy) (*pīti*) means the pleasurable interest of insight, which is fivefold, like that of the absorption factor (*jhānanga*) "rapture" previously explained in Chapter 4. The experience of zest may be overwhelming. Any of the five grades of zest may become prominent. It may be difficult for disciples just to watch the experience of zest rise and fall. They may even believe that they have reached the end of the path and, consequently, stop practicing.

"Serenity" (*passaddhi*) means the insight tranquility that calms the body and mind, keeping them in a light, flexible, easily wielded, and very clear condition, whereby meditators enjoy "superhuman delight", which is called "*amānusi-rati*". Although the experience of a deep and penetrating tranquility, or calm, may have arisen in disciples at various times throughout their practice, the feelings of bodily and mental peace that occur at this stage are more pervasive and profound. The body is cool and comfortable, and the mind is relaxed. Each movement of the body and mind is effortless, and the process of noticing the rise and fall of all phenomena proceeds smoothly. They may become content with this significant experience of tranquility and not desire to forgo it for the sake of cultivating additional insight.

"Bliss" (*sukha*) means happiness arising from insight. It diffuses the whole body of the meditator with ease and comfort of a high degree. At this stage, the experience of happiness feels all-encompassing, since it is present even during times when disciples are not engaged in formal meditation. They may believe that this is the happiness for which they have been searching, and they may want to communicate to everyone what they are feeling. A deep sense of gratitude for the teacher may arise. The experience of intense and overwhelming zest (*pīti*), serenity (*passaddhi*), or bliss (*sukha*) is the result of an imbalance between effort and concentration, with too much focus on concentration.

"Resolve" (*adhimokkha*) means faith, resolute and strong, associated with insight, exceedingly serene to the mind and its concomitants. Disciples may experience exceptional faith (*saddhā*) in the *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha*. This strong sense of faith, devotion, or inspiration may even bring them to tears. Gratitude and a strong desire to support their teacher or the meditation center may surface. Great enthusiasm for continuing the practice may arise; lay practitioners may even have thoughts of ordaining or remaining at the meditation center until the final stages of purification are achieved. Faith will need to be balanced by discernment, or discrimination, for the further stages of insight to occur.

"Exaltation" (*paggaha* or *paggāha*) means the energy associated with insight, not slack, not extremely strenuous, but upright and well established. A powerful energy may arise, and, with it, an absence of any sleepiness, or lethargic feelings. Disciples may be able to meditate for extended periods of time without difficulty, noticing the object of their meditation with balanced effort. They may believe that this energy is a permanent condition and fail to recognize its conditioned and impermanent nature.

"Mindfulness" means the awareness (*upaṭṭhāna*) associated with insight, well fixed, well established, like divine vision presenting objects to the mind with their full value. Mindfulness may arise without any apparent effort on the part of disciples. It is almost as if mindfulness reaches toward the objects that arise to consciousness under its own power. They may believe that there is no condition of mind that will arise of which they will not be mindful. They may be deceived, thinking that enlightenment has been reached, since they have perfect mindfulness. However, for further insight knowledges to come to fruition, mindfulness itself needs to be seen with mindfulness.

"Balance" means the equanimity (*upekkhā*) of insight, involving indifference, which is neutral towards all sorts and conditions of phenomena and indifferent to mental activities. It is the absence of pleasure or pain during reflection. With the arising of equanimity, there comes an ease in discerning the three characteristics of existence: impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not self (*anattā*). Here, "equanimity" does not mean a neutral spiritual feeling. In this context, equanimity means the ability of the mind to penetrate every formation that arises without effort. The true nature of each formation immediately becomes apparent. Disciples may believe that all defilements (*kilesa*) have been eradicated and decide to stop practicing. In actuality, the defilements have only been suppressed. Wrong view (*diṭṭhi* or *micchā-diṭṭhi*) remains until the very last stage of purification is reached.

The final corruption of insight is "desire" (*nikanti*), which means insight-attachment (*vipassanā-nikanti*). It manifests as an intense desire for and attachment to the knowledge of insight, endowed, as it is, with such advantages as self-illumination, and so on. It is so subtle, so refined, that it cannot even be distinguished as a corruption of insight. It arises as a result of the delight disciples derive from the profound occurrences they experience. They may not recognize the very subtle attachments they have developed and may believe that the experiences result from a supramundane attainment. This becomes a barrier to further practice and spiritual development. It is the presence of this attachment that is the deciding factor as to whether these experiences are to be considered corruptions of insight.

As with illumination, so with any other of these factors, meditators may be deluded into thinking that they have attained to the final path and its fruition. But, they who have been well informed and instructed by their teacher and are skilled, experienced, and accomplished in meditation, will not be deceived in these states. They will place them with the other phenomena, as possessing the three characteristics of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not self (*anattā*). (Here, the characteristic "suffering" should be understood to mean the state of being subject to rise and fall.) Knowing them thus and understanding their true nature, they proceed until they reach the final goal, the

Noble Path and its fruition. Thus, their knowledge is established in knowing "This is the path, and this is not the path." This is the purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path (*maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*).

Purification by Knowledge and Vision of the Way

Disciples who are free from the corrupting influences of the ten defilements of insight and who have gained the purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path (*maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*) in the previous stage develop their insight to its culmination in this stage through the systematic and steady progress of deeper understanding. This is called "*paṭipadā*", "gradual progress", which consists of eight knowledges dealing with contemplation and with that which is called "*saccānulomika-ñāṇa*", "adaptation-to-truth knowledge", that is, the knowledge adapted to the Four Noble Truths.

There are ten levels of knowledge, or realization, in *vipassanā*. The first step is theoretical knowledge. All of the remaining nine steps can only be reached through true Buddhist meditation with the help of a competent teacher. As explained in the *Visuddhimagga*, disciples should apply themselves to these ten knowledges in the following order:

1. The first step is the appreciation of suffering (*dukkha*), impermanence (*anicca*), and not self (*anattā*) by close examination and analysis (*sammasana*).

2. The second step is called "*udayavayānupassanā-ñāṇa*". This means the knowledge gained by reflecting upon the rise and fall of composite things. This knowledge was mentioned in the previous stage, but there, it was vague and weak, being associated with the defilements (*kilesa*). Here, it is purged of defilements and is more vivid and strong. Moreover, its main purpose in this stage is to visualize the three characteristics of composite mental and physical phenomena by understanding the fact that they are subject to momentary changes which are conditioned by repeated disturbance of rising and dissolution. Whenever disciples experience the changes taking place in their sensations, they are on this level. Here, they train themselves in insight with regard to the arising and dissolution of mental and material phenomena:

   > *"All the physical and mental phenomena, without having previously been, come to arise, and, having arisen, they disappear again. Through the arising of the prenatal ignorance, craving, kamma, and nutriment, the arising of corporeality [material form] is conditioned; and, through the extinction of these four causes, the extinction of corporeality takes place."*

   All life is like a dewdrop that dissolves as soon as the sun arises. Life is like an empty bubble or like a furrow drawn on the water that immediately disappears

again. Life is something insubstantial, unreal, an illusion, a mirage, a phantom, like a fire-wreath called forth by the circular swinging of a firebrand, or like a ghost-land, or foam, or a banana-stem (consisting of mere sheaths).

When this knowledge is established in its purest form, disciples realize the characteristic of impermanence in its true nature. Consequently, they understand that that which is impermanent is suffering in that it is disturbance, and that which is suffering, or disturbed, is not self, because it has no power to control its own changes and disturbance. Thus, what is called an "individual" is merely a becoming without real being, an object of disturbance devoid of subject, an empty notion without essence. Meditators thus note everything in its true nature through the knowledge that reflects on the rising and dissolution of mental and physical phenomena. This knowledge is free from corruption and is termed "insight which has arrived at the right course of progress" (*vithipaṭipanna-vipassanā*).

3. The knowledge gained by reflecting upon the rapidly changing nature of composite phenomena is called "*bhangānupassanā-ñāṇa*", "knowledge of dissolution". It is experienced as a swift flow of current or a flash of energy. The decay or dissolution aspect, or the breaking up of the *kalāpas*, is most prominent at this stage. Thus, while knowing that all these formations of existence, once arisen, will soon again come to extinction, the contemplation on dissolution arises in disciples. Just as consciousness is conditioned through the physical or mental objects, disciples consider it as impermanent. They turn away from it; they no longer delight in it. They bring it to extinction, not letting it arise again. They let it go and no longer adhere to it. And, considering it as transient (*anicca*), they overcome the idea of something permanent (*nicca*).

"The aggregates become dissolved;
There is no ego to be found.
The dissolution of the aggregates
Is what most people would call 'death'."

When disciples experience material and immaterial states as impermanent, suffering, and not self, their knowledge becomes sharp, and the true nature of compounded phenomena quickly becomes apparent. Their mindfulness establishes itself upon their characteristics of extinction, decay, breaking up, and cessation. They see: "Thus arises that which goes under the name of compound (*saṁkhāra*), and thus it ceases." When they thus contemplate, attending to one theme, that is, seeing only the cessation of compounded phenomena, there arises in them the insight knowledge which reflects upon breaking-up, dissolution, decay. In this connection, the following may be recalled (*Paṭisambhidāmagga* 57):

"How does the understanding which analyzes the object, in contemplating its decay, become full insight knowledge? Consciousness arises with matter as its

object, and ceases. Having reflected upon that object, one sees the breaking-up of that consciousness. How does one see it? One sees it as impermanent and not as permanent, as suffering and not as happiness, as not self and not as self. Seeing that, one feels disgusted at it and not delighted, dispassionate and not passionate. [Thereupon,] one causes it to cease and not to arise. One relinquishes it and does not cling to it. Seeing it as impermanent, one rejects the idea of permanence; seeing it as suffering, one rejects the idea of happiness; seeing it as not self, one rejects the idea of self... Relinquishing it, one rejects clinging. Consciousness arises with feeling... perception... (predisposing) mental formations... cognition... Relinquishing it, one rejects clinging... It is knowing (ñāṇa) in the sense of comprehending; it is full knowledge (paññā) in the sense of fully realizing. Hence, it is said that the understanding which analyzes the object in contemplating its decay is full insight knowledge."

As disciples thus see that all composite phenomena are continually breaking up, they gain the knowledge of *bhangānupassanā*, "dissolution", which is conducive to eight advantages:

- Elimination of wrong views regarding becoming;
- Abandoning of craving for life in a world of change;
- Constant application in what is suitable;
- Purity of livelihood;
- Elimination of anxiety;
- Expulsion of fear;
- Possession of patience and self-control;
- Overcoming of dissatisfaction.

4. Inasmuch as all aspects of one's mind and body are experienced as insubstantial, in step four, there arises the knowledge in disciples that this existence is terrifying, dreadful, or fearful (*bhaya*). Whoever knows how all formations of experience have become extinguished in the past, how the present ones are coming to extinction, and how also all future ones will become extinguished, to them, there arises, at that moment, the knowledge consisting in awareness of terror or dread.

   Thus, to those who resort to the contemplation of the impermanent nature of composite phenomena, all forms of existence appear fearful. As they see that all compounded phenomena in the past have ceased, that the present ones are ceasing, and also that those that are coming to birth in the future will cease, in this step, there arises what is called "*bhayatūpaṭṭhāna-ñāṇa*", "the knowledge of the presence of fear (*bhaya*)".

   Inasmuch as all compounded phenomena in all forms of existence are subject to destruction, so they appear fearful. We may thus speak of the presence of fear (*bhayatūpaṭṭhāna*). This has been explained as follows (*Paṭisambhidāmagga* 63):

> *"To those who contemplate [compounded phenomena] as impermanent, [their] manifestation appears fearful. To those who contemplate [compounded phenomena] as suffering, [their] manifestation appears fearful. To those who contemplate [compounded phenomena] as not self, [their] manifestation appears fearful."*

When disciples consider transitoriness, they see the death of compounded phenomena. Thereupon, the characteristic of the death of these phenomena appears as fearful. When they consider suffering, they see only the repeated disturbance of their existence, though ordinary men (*puthujjana*) see it as happy. Hence, their existence appears to them as fearful. When they consider not self, they see both signs, (1) the compounded phenomena (*saṁkhāra*) themselves and (2) existence, as null, void, empty, ownerless, misleading, like a mirage. The insight knowledge thus gained by comprehending compounded phenomena as fearful is termed "*bhayatū-paṭṭhāna-ñāṇa*".

5. In the fifth step, disciples know that this existence is full of misery, or woe (*ādīnava*). "The arising of existence is terror": such knowledge, consisting in awareness of terror, is called "the knowledge of misery or woe". "The continuity of existence, the course of rebirth, the entering into existence, old age, disease, death, sorrow, lamentation, despair, all are terror." Such knowledge, consisting in awareness of terror (*bhaya*), is called "the knowledge of misery, wretchedness, or woe (*ādīnava*)".

   To those who develop that knowledge (*ñāṇa*) of the presence of fear (*bhaya*) in all forms of becoming, there appears no protection, no shelter, no refuge. Everything that is to be obtained in all planes of existence is perilous and full of dangers. As a person coming to a jungle inhabited by wild beasts is frightened and horrified and sees dangers and afflictions on all sides, so those, having seen all compounded phenomena as fearful, see them as dangers and perils on all sides. As they thus see, there arises what is called "*ādīnavānupassanā-ñāṇa*", "the knowledge that reflects upon the danger of wretchedness of composite things".

   This knowledge is the outcome of the previous one, which saw all composite phenomena as fearful (*bhayatūpaṭṭhāna-ñāṇa*) (*Paṭisambhidāmagga* 59f.):

   > *"How does full knowledge of the presence of fear become knowledge of danger (ādīnavānupassanā-ñāṇa)? Birth is fear — thus, understanding in the presence of fear becomes knowledge of danger. Existence is fear — thus, understanding in the presence of fear becomes knowledge of danger. Decay is fear — thus, understanding in the presence of fear becomes knowledge of danger. Sickness is fear — thus, understanding in the presence of fear becomes knowledge of danger. Despair is fear — thus, understanding in the presence of fear becomes knowledge of danger. Sorrow is fear — thus, understanding in the presence of fear becomes knowledge of danger. Lamentation is fear — thus, understanding in the presence of fear becomes knowledge of danger. Despair is fear — thus, understanding in*

the presence of fear becomes knowledge of danger."

Herein, that which is fearful is danger, because it is a cause of fear. It is wretched, because it is unhappy and woeful. That which is woeful is base, since it belongs to the lower nature and the corruptible. That which is base is merely conditioned. Therefore, it has been said that the understanding of fear with regard to compounded phenomena becomes a reflection upon danger (*ādīnavānupassanā-ñāṇa*). Consequently, disciples come to possess the knowledge of the path of peace (*santi-pada*), seeing that not coming to birth, to exist, etc., is safety (*khema*). Thus, we read (*Visuddhimagga* 649):

"Birth, existence, and sign,
Accumulation, rebirth — all these things one sees as woe.
Seeing thus is the knowledge of danger.
The absence of these five things
One sees as happiness.
This constitutes one's knowledge
In the path of peace.
This twofold knowledge, resting on five themes,
Becomes in number ten in all.
Being skilled in them,
One is not wavering in opinions."

6. In the sixth step, disciples know that this existence is repugnant, disagreeable, disgusting (*nibbidā*). When they thus understand that all formations of existence are misery, their minds turn away from them, are weary of them, and no longer delight in them.

   Seeing all compounded things as dangers, disciples are repelled by and fret against all forms of existence. They take no delight in perishable, fearful, dangerous worldly things and see safety and happiness in detachment from them. Therefore, they apply their mind to the tranquil path of peace. In this stage, there arises in them "*nibbidānupassanā-ñāṇa*", "the knowledge of reflecting upon detachment from, or feeling disgust at, composite things".

   This knowledge is one in meaning with the preceding two knowledges, for, when disciples see it and have seen all composite phenomena as fearful, it comes to be known as "the knowledge in the presence of fear". Then, in the next stage, they see the dangers, and it is called "the knowledge of seeing dangers". As a result of these two, disciples see detachment as safety. Thus, it comes to be known as "the knowledge of reflecting upon detachment".

Steps four, five, and six are devoted to seeing the negative aspects of conditioned existence. Attachment to conditioned existence is so strong that it takes a very powerful dose of medicine to cure practitioners of this attachment. The last four steps concern the

effort to be put forth:

7. In step seven, disciples know that there is an urgent need to escape from this very existence (*muñcitukamyatā-ñāṇa*). Now, when finding no delight in the formations of existence, they then wish to get rid of them, they seek escape from them.

   As disciples develop this knowledge of detachment, their mind has no clinging to any form of worldly existence. Their whole desire is to be released, to escape from all that is conditioned. As a fish caught in a net desires to escape, so the mind of the meditator desires to escape, to be released from the whole world of change. Then, to those who are thus desirous of release, there arises "*muñcitu-kamyatā-ñāṇa*", "the knowledge of desire for release".

8. In step eight, disciples know that the time has come to work with full realization for liberation, using the three characteristics of existence as the base (*paṭisaṁkha*). That is to say, in order to find deliverance from all formations of existence, they reflect on them and determine their three characteristics.

   They understand that all formations are impermanent (*anicca*), being without duration, persisting for but a short while, limited by their arising and disappearance, perishable, transient, frail, unsteady, subject to change, without substance, unreal, conditioned, subject to extinction (death).

   They understand that all formations are unsatisfactory (*dukkha*), being again and again oppressive, being hard to endure, being the root of all suffering.

   They understand that all formations are not self (*anattā*), being something alien, unreal, void, empty, without owner, without master, without controller, thus (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* III, 167; IV, 154): "Empty are all formations, they are void of self and of anything pertaining to a self ... I am not anything to anyone, nor does anything belong to me in any way." Just as a reed is hollow and without pith, so also are corporeality, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness empty, void, impersonal, without master, unfree, uncontrollable, impotent, and alien.

9. In step nine, disciples detach themselves from all formations and break away from or abandon ego-centeredness, or ego-grasping (*ahaṁkāra*). While they are thus considering all the formations of existence to be empty (*suñña*) and are determining their three characteristics, they give up fear and anguish and abide in equanimity with regard to them (*saṁkhārupekkhā*), no longer concerning themselves about them, and no longer conceiving the idea of "I" and "mine."

   Whoever considers the formations of existence as impermanent (*anicca*), to them, they appear as a passing away. Whoever considers them as unsatisfactory (*dukkha*), to them, they appear as terror. Whoever considers them as not self (*anattā*), to them, they appear as empty.

   Thus arises *saṁkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*, "the knowledge of indifference to all composite phenomena". If this knowledge sees, at once, *nibbāna* as peace, it forsakes the object of *saṁkhāra* and rushes into *nibbāna*. Otherwise, it proceeds by way of the

threefold contemplation and becomes the entrance to *nibbāna* by way of the threefold deliverance, which will be seen later.

10. And, lastly, disciples gain the knowledge that will accelerate the attempt to reach the goal (*anuloma-ñāṇa*). "Now the path will reveal itself": thus thinking, they reflect with equanimity on all the formations of existence as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not self, and, thereupon, their consciousness sinks into the unconscious mind-stream (*bhavanga-sota*). Immediately thereafter, awareness arises at the mind-door (*mano-dvāra*), taking as objects all phenomena just as before, regarding them as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not self. Then, in following up again the interrupted continuity of consciousness, the three impulsive moments (*javana*), known as the preliminary (*parikamma*), access (*upacāra*), and adaptation (*anuloma*) moments, flash up one after the other, with the same phenomena as object. One speaks of "adaptation" because this knowledge adapts itself to the preceding eight kinds of insight knowledge performing the same functions and to the following elements of enlightenment immediately thereafter.

When disciples develop the knowledge of indifference towards all composite phenomena, their faith becomes intense, their energy is sharp, their mindfulness is well established, and their mind is concentrated. Knowledge grows to be full at the stage of turning from worldly existence and inclining to *nibbāna*. In the course of the psychological development of this state, which is purified through the process of the nine previous insight knowledges, there arises *anuloma-ñāṇa*, "adaptive knowledge", which is the culmination of insight concerning compound things. It is this knowledge that raises the mind from its worldly position to the transcendental state, that is, to the path of *nibbāna*. Hence, it is said to be the culmination of *vuṭṭhānagāmini-vipassanā*, "insight going to rising-up", in other words, the Noble Path.

The scriptures allude to this knowledge under various names. In the Saḷāyatanavibhanga Sutta (The Exposition of the Sixfold Base) (*Majjhima Nikāya* III, 220), for example, it is called "*atammayatā*", "not made of that".

"Monks, depending on atammayatā, attending to atammayatā, you should reject, should transcend that indifference which has one state, which rests on one state."

The Commentary on this explains:

Craving associated with composite things, combined with composite things, is called "tammaya" or "tammayatā", that which is "made of that", because it does not arise without them. Insight leading to emergence is called "a-tammayatā" because it is not associated with and is opposed to that craving, or it is "atammayatā" because it removes craving, which is called "tammayatā". By the development of this insight of "atammayatā" (anuloma-ñāṇa), that indifference which has one state and one object, that is, the indifference associated with the four formless, or immaterial, absorptions (arūpajjhāna), should be transcended.

This knowledge is called "detachment" in the Alagaddūpama Sutta (The Simile of the Snake) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 22 [I, 136]): "Detached, one becomes dispassionate. Being dispassionate, one is delivered." In the Susīma Sutta (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* II, 124), it is called "knowledge of the law of causality". It is mentioned in the Dasuttara Sutta (Expanding Decades) (*Dīgha Nikāya* III, 288) as the principal factor of purification (*pārisuddhi-padhāniyanga*). The *Paṭṭhāna* (II, 159) explains it under two names: (1) adaptation of qualification (*gotrabhū*) and (2) adaptation of cleansing (*vodāna*).

These ten stages of the development of insight knowledge, from the beginning of the appreciation of suffering (*dukkha*), impermanence (*anicca*), and not self (*anattā*) to the knowledge which will accelerate the attempt to reach to goal, constitute the whole system of *vipassanā* progress. Because it involves purification from the opposite states, this is called "purity" (*visuddhi*). The whole process is the development of knowledge rising from insight. Hence, it is called "knowledge and insight" (*ñāṇadassana*). It progresses towards the Noble Path, hence, it is progress (*paṭipāda*). Taken as a whole, it is called "*paṭipāda-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*", "purification by knowledge and vision of the way".

Purification by Knowledge and Vision

This comprises the four Noble Paths (*ariya-magga*): (1) the path of Stream-Entry (*Sotāpatti-magga*); (2) the path of Once-Returning (*Sakadāgāmi-magga*); (3) the path of Non-Returning (*Anāgāmi-magga*); and (4) the path of Arahatship (*Arahatta-magga*). The knowledge of these four paths is known as "purification by knowledge and vision" (*ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*), and it will be explained later when we deal with the attainment of *nibbāna*.

Disciples must accomplish these seven purifications, each one for the sake of the others, and the final goal of the whole scheme, as has been explained, is absolute freedom from the world of change. Hence, we read in the Rathavinīta Sutta (The Relay Chariots) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 24):

> *"Friend, purification of virtue is only to this extent, that is, for the sake of the purification of mind; [likewise,] purification of mind for the sake of purification of view; purification of view for the sake of purification by overcoming doubt; purification by overcoming doubt for the sake of purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path; purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path for the sake of purification of knowledge and vision of the way; purification by knowledge and vision of the way for the sake of purification by knowledge and vision of the four paths for the sake of attaining absolute freedom (anupādāparinibbāna)."*

Just as the system of *samādhi* meditation has been set forth with the scheme of *kammaṭṭhāna* practice, the system of *vipassanā* meditation is set forth according to the scheme of these seven stages of purification (*satta visuddhi*) of the true knowledge of phenomenal existence, and it has been linked with the four Noble Paths as the definite system of attaining *nibbāna*.

These seven stages of purification are to be attained in sequence, each being the support for the one that follows. The first purification corresponds to the morality (*sīla*) aspect of the path, the second to the concentration (*samādhi*) aspect, and the last five to the wisdom (*paññā*) aspect. The first six stages are mundane, the last is the supramundane paths. The following table summarizes the seven stages of purification:

Stages of Purification	**Practice**
1. Purification of virtue	Four kinds of purified virtue
2. Purification of mind	Access and absorption concentration
3. Purification of view	Understanding the characteristics, etc. of mental and material phenomena
4. Purification by overcoming doubt	Discernment of conditions for mental and material phenomena
5. Purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path	1. Knowledge of comprehension 2. Knowledge of rise and fall (tender phase): distinguishing the wrong path from the right path of contemplation
6. Purification by knowledge and vision of the way	2. Knowledge of rise and fall (mature phase) 3. Knowledge of dissolution 4. Knowledge of fearfulness 5. Knowledge of danger 6. Knowledge of disenchantment 7. Knowledge of desire for deliverance 8. Knowledge of reflection 9. Knowledge of equanimity towards formations 10. Knowledge of conformity
Between stages 6 and 7	Change of lineage (*gotrubhu*)
7. Purification by knowledge and vision	Knowledge of the four supramundane paths

Herein ends the discussion of the seven stages of purification. ■

28

Methods of Vipassanā Meditation

Vipassanā bhāvanā, “insight meditation”, includes many methods that have been developed on the basis of the last five of the seven stages of purification (*visuddhi*). It consists of the contemplation of the three characteristics of existence: (1) impermanence (*anicca*); (2) suffering (*dukkha*); and non-self (*anattā*). In the fifth stage of purification, dealing with the purification by knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path (*maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*), the practice of *vipassanā* meditation begins with *kalāpa sammasana*, “the contemplation of groups (*kalāpa*)”, or “the concise contemplation of material and immaterial states” — that is to say, the meditation upon the constituents of the individual, namely, the five aggregates (*khandha*), which are taken as different categories and determined as impermanent, suffering, and non-self in due order. This is called “methodical insight” (*naya-vipassanā*), and it is divided into various divisions according to the various conditions of phenomenal states.

Further, it is stated in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I, 53), and more fully explained in the *Visuddhimagga* (p. 607f.), that this method of contemplation is based upon the development of insight which is known as “*sammasana-ñāṇa*”, literally, “the knowledge of reflection, or determination”. The following is an abbreviated form of the context in which the exposition of this method occurs.

1. The five aggregates:

> *“Comprehension of states of the past, present, and future, all taken together, is the knowledge of contemplation of groups (kalāpa sammasana); that is to say, whatever matter (rūpa) there is, whether past, present, or future, internal or external, coarse or delicate, high or low, near or far, ‘all matter is impermanent’. Thus one determines. This is one contemplation (sammasana). ‘All [matter] is suffering’. Thus one determines. This is one contemplation. ‘All [matter] is non-self’. Thus one determines. This is one contemplation.*
>
> *“Whatever feeling (vedanā) there is, whether past, present, or future, internal or external, coarse or delicate, high or low, near or far, ‘all feeling is impermanent’. Thus one determines. This is one contemplation. ‘All [feeling] is suffering’. Thus one determines. This is one contemplation. ‘All [feeling] is non-self’. Thus one determines. This is one contemplation.*

> *"Whatever perception (saññā) there is, whether past, present, or future, internal or external, coarse or delicate, high or low, near or far, 'all perception is impermanent'. Thus one determines. This is one contemplation. 'All [perception] is suffering'. Thus one determines. This is one contemplation. 'All [perception] is non-self'. Thus one determines. This is one contemplation.*
>
> *"Whatever predisposing mental formations (saṁkhāra) there are, whether past, present, or future, internal or external, coarse or delicate, high or low, near or far, 'all predisposing mental formations are impermanent'. Thus one determines. This is one contemplation. 'All [predisposing mental formations] are suffering'. Thus one determines. This is one contemplation. 'All [predisposing mental formations] are non-self'. Thus one determines. This is one contemplation.*
>
> *"Whatever consciousness (viññāṇa) there is, whether past, present, or future, internal or external, coarse or delicate, high or low, near or far, 'all consciousness is impermanent'. Thus one determines. This is one contemplation. 'All [consciousness] is suffering'. Thus one determines. This is one contemplation. 'All [consciousness] is non-self'. Thus one determines. This is one contemplation."*

The same is repeated for the remaining divisions (cf. *Paṭṭhāna* I, 5f.):

2. The six senses;
3. The six sense objects;
4. The six sense cognitions;
5. The six sense contacts;
6. The six sense feelings;
7. The six sense perceptions;
8. The six sensory thoughts or volitions;
9. The six sensory desires;
10. The six sensory reasonings;
11. The six sensory investigations;
12. The six sense elements (that is, the element of the eye, the element of the ear, the element of the nose, the element of the tongue, the element of the body, and the element of the mind);
13. The ten *kasiṇas*;
14. The thirty-two principal body parts;
15. The twelve sense spheres;
16. The eighteen elements;
17. The twenty-two faculties;
18. The three planes (the sensory plane, the fine material plane, the immaterial plane);
19. The three worlds of becoming (the same as the three planes);
20. The threefold existence (the existence of perception, of non-perception, and of neither perception nor non-perception);

21. The three states of becoming (the becoming of one aggregate, of four aggregates, and of five aggregates);
22. The four fine material absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*);
23. The four divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*), or immeasurables (*appamaññā*);
24. The four formless attainments (*arūpajjhāna*);
25. The twelve links (*nidāna*) of dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*).

All these divisions of states should be combined with the three contemplations in the manner shown above (cf. *Paṭṭhāna* I—XXV), and, at the end of each, disciples should reflect:

> "All is impermanent in the sense of being extinct."
> "All is suffering in the sense of being fearful."
> "All is non-self in the sense of being void of essence."

All mundane (*lokiya*) states (*dhamma*) are included in these twenty-five divisions, while the transcendental (*lokuttara*) states are excluded, because they do not combine with this contemplation, which is known as "*sammasana*". Each of these divisions forms an independent method of insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*), and disciples should first take that which is more vividly evident and is more easily grasped for their subject of meditation. Those who wish to develop the method of contemplation by way of the five aggregates (*khandha*) should apply themselves to the following scheme of formulas. These formulas should be repeated both orally and mentally in the course of the practice.

Contemplation of the Five Aggregates: I

1. *Rūpaṁ aniccaṁ, dukkhaṁ, anattā.*
   "Form (or matter) is impermanent, subject to suffering, not self."
2. *Vedanā aniccā, dukkhā, anattā.*
   "Feeling is impermanent, subject to suffering, not self."
3. *Saññā aniccā, dukkhā, anattā.*
   "Perception is impermanent, subject to suffering, not self."
4. *Saṁkhārā aniccā, dukkhā, anattā.*
   "(Predisposing) mental formations are impermanent, subject to suffering, not self."
5. *Viññāṇaṁ aniccaṁ, dukkhaṁ, anattā.*
   "Consciousness is impermanent, subject to suffering, not self."

Aniccaṁ khayaṭṭhena. "Impermanent in the sense of being extinct."
Dukkhaṁ bhayaṭṭhena. "Subject to suffering in the sense of fearful."
Anattā asārakaṭṭhena. "Non-self in the sense of being void of essence."

Contemplation of the Five Aggregates: II

Combined with the three phases of time and other conditions:

1. *Rūpaṁ atīta-anāgata-paccuppannaṁ aniccaṁ khayaṭṭhena*.
   "The form of the past, present, and future is impermanent in the sense of being extinct (*khaya*)." (The same with feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness.)
2. *Rūpaṁ ajjhattaṁ vā bahiddhā vā aniccaṁ khayaṭṭhena*.
   "The form, internal or external, is impermanent in the sense of being extinct." (The same with feeling, etc.)
3. *Rūpaṁ olārikaṁ vā sukhamaṁ vā aniccaṁ khayaṭṭhena*.
   "The form, gross or refined, is impermanent in the sense of being extinct." (The same with feeling, etc.)
4. *Rūpaṁ hīnaṁ vā panītaṁ vā aniccaṁ khayaṭṭhena*.
   "The form, inferior or superior, is impermanent in the sense of being extinct." (The same with feeling, etc.)
5. *Rūpaṁ dūre vā santike vā aniccaṁ khayaṭṭhena*.
   "The form, near or far, is impermanent in the sense of being extinct." (The same with feeling, etc.)

(The same formulas are to be repeated with the words "subject to suffering" and "not self".)

1. *Impermanence (anicca)*: The meaning of these lines is that the form of the past has become extinct in the past and has not reached this (the present) becoming. Hence, it is impermanent in the sense of being extinct. The form of the present is also extinct even now — it goes no further. Hence, it is impermanent. The form that will be in the future will arise in the next becoming. It will be extinct then and will not reach the following becoming. That which is internal does not go to the external and becomes extinct while just internal. Hence, it is impermanent. The same is also true of the rest. In this way, all these forms are impermanent in the sense of being extinct in their own place and condition. Herein, there are eleven methods of contemplation concerning the impermanence of the material form. Likewise, there are eleven methods of contemplation concerning suffering and non-self.
2. *Suffering (dukkha)*: All these states are suffering in the sense of being fearful. That is to say, all that which is impermanent is beset with fear, as explained in the Sīhopama Sutta (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* III, 84f.). This consideration of the fearful is one contemplation, and, when it is combined with other methods, it is as manifold as that of impermanence.
3. *Not self (anattā)*: All that which is suffering is "not self" in the sense of being void of essence, that is to say, void of a self and anything pertaining to a self. That which is

impermanent is subject to suffering, for it is oppressed by rise and fall. That which is impermanent and suffering is non-self, for it is unable to overcome its own impermanence and enslavement to suffering. Therefore, it is said (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* III, 66): "Monks, if this body were the self, it would not be subject to sickness, etc." Thus, the idea that there is in man a permanent, everlasting, absolute entity, be it called "soul," "self," "ego," or whatever, is an imaginary, false belief which has no factual basis. This consideration of egolessness is one contemplation, and, when it is combined with other methods, it is as manifold as that of impermanence.

Contemplation of the Five Aggregates: III

The *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (III, 24) describes yet another method of concise contemplation which makes use of terms synonymous with *anicca*, etc. The formula runs as follows:

> *Rūpaṁ atīta-anāgata-paccuppannaṁ ... khayadhammaṁ, vayadhammaṁ, virāga-dhammaṁ, nirodhadhammaṁ.*
>
> "The form past, present, or future … is subject to extinction, to waning, to detachment, to cessation." (The same with feeling, etc.)

These expressions more assuredly determine the conditioned nature of the five aggregates of clinging and also indicate the various ways in which the contemplation has been developed, according to the individual capacity of comprehension.

Contemplation of the Five Aggregates: IV

The importance of this contemplation of the five aggregates as impermanent, suffering, and not self was emphasized by the *Buddha*, who showed forty aspects of it, when explaining a more advanced knowledge of insight (*vipassanā*), termed "*anuloma-khanti*", "adaptive (*anuloma*) knowledge (*ñāṇa*) of balance (patience, forbearance) (*khanti*)", applied to absolute certainty (*sammattaniyāma*) of the first path (*sotāpatti*). The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (II, 238) gives the following list of the forty terms used:

> *"What are the forty ways in which one (the disciple of vipassanā) attains adaptive balance? What are the forty ways in which one enters upon absolute certainty? One contemplates the five aggregates as:*
>
> 1. *Impermanent (anicca);*
> 2. *Suffering (dukkha);*
> 3. *Disease (roga);*

4. *Boil (gaṇḍa);*
5. *Arrow (salla);*
6. *Evil (agha);*
7. *Sickness (ābādha);*
8. *Alien (para);*
9. *Crumbling (paloka);*
10. *Calamity (īti);*
11. *Danger (upaddava);*
12. *Fear (bhaya);*
13. *Misfortune (upasagga);*
14. *Unstable (cala);*
15. *Disintegrating (pabhangu);*
16. *Inconstant (addhuva);*
17. *Without protection (atāṇa);*
18. *Without shelter (alena);*
19. *Without refuge (asaraṇa);*
20. *Null (ritta);*
21. *Vain (tuccha);*
22. *Empty (suñña);*
23. *Without self (anattā);*
24. *Dangerous (ādīnava);*
25. *Mutable (vipariṇāmadhamma);*
26. *Without essence (asāra);*
27. *Root of evil (aghamūla);*
28. *Murderous (vadhaka);*
29. *Unprosperous (vibhava);*
30. *Without taints (sāsava);*
31. *Compounded (sankhata);*
32. *Prey of Māra (mārāmisa);*
33. *Subject to birth (jātidhamma);*
34. *Subject to decay (jarādhamma);*
35. *Subject to ailment (vyādhidham);*
36. *Subject to death (maraṇadhamma);*
37. *Subject to sorrow (sokadhamma);*
38. *Subject to grief (paridevadhamma);*
39. *Subject to despair (upāyāsadhamma);*
40. *Subject to corruption (sankilesadhamma).*

"Thus contemplating the five aggregates in these forty ways, one attains adaptive balance. Seeing that the complete cessation of the five aggregates is permanent nibbāna, one enters upon absolute certainty."

The Commentary on this method, given in the *Visuddhimagga*, explains each word in detail and enumerates two hundred kinds of contemplation on the five aggregates (*khandha*) by way of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). There are fifty contemplations of impermanence, each of the five aggregates being the basis of ten: (1) impermanent; (2) crumbling; (3) unstable; (4) disintegrating; (5) uncertain; (6) mutable; (7) without essence; (8) unprosperous; (9) compounded; and (10) subject to death. There are twenty-five contemplations of non-self, each aggregate being the basis of five: (1) alien; (2) null; (3) vain; (4) empty; and (5) without self. There are one hundred twenty-five contemplations of suffering, each aggregate being the basis of the remaining twenty-five, as suffering, disease, etc. Thus, to those who contemplate the five aggregates by this method of two hundred kinds of contemplation, the insight into these three characteristics of phenomenal objects becomes established. This method also comprises the reviewing knowledge of analysis (*paṭisaṁkhānupassanā-ñāṇa*) (for details, see Chapter 27).

All these methods shown in connection with the five aggregates should be applied to the remaining divisions such as the six senses, the six sense objects, and so on up to the twelve links (*nidāna*) of dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*).

Summarizing all conditioned states in the aggregate of (predisposing) mental formations (*saṁkhāra*) and all mundane (*lokiya*) and supramundane (*lokuttara*) states in the category of *dhamma*, disciples may practice the following formulas as self-sufficient schemes of insight (*vipassanā*) contemplation (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 230; *Dhammapada*, verses 277—279):

> *"All compound things (sabbe saṁkhārā) are impermanent (anicca); those who realize this through insight-wisdom (vipassanā) are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to purity (visuddhi).*
>
> *"All compound things have suffering (dukkha) as their nature; those who realize this through insight-wisdom are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to purity.*
>
> *"All states (sabbe dhammā) are without self (anattā); those who realize this through insight-wisdom are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to purity."*

According to the *Anguttara Nikāya*, Jhānavagga, impermanence, suffering, and non-self are treated as separate subjects of contemplation under the name "perception" (*saññā*). All twenty perceptions (see Chapter 5), except numbers 1, 2, 3, 14, and 16—20, belong to *vipassanā* meditation. The twenty perceptions are:

(a) External Objects

1. Contemplation of impurity (*asubha saññā*);

2. Contemplation of light (*āloka saññā*);
3. Contemplation of the loathsomeness of food (*āhāre paṭikkūla saññā*);
4. Contemplation of detachment from the whole world (*sabbaloke anabhirata saññā*);
5. Contemplation of impermanence (*anicca saññā*);
6. Contemplation of the suffering nature of that which is impermanent (*anicce dukkha saññā*);
7. Contemplation of the soullessness of that which is suffering (*dukkhe anattā saññā*);
8. Contemplation of avoidance (*pahāṇa saññā*);
9. Contemplation of non-attachment (*virāga saññā*);
10. Contemplation of cessation (*nirodha saññā*).

(b) Concepts

11. Contemplation of impermanence (*anicca saññā*);
12. Contemplation of non-self (*anattā saññā*);
13. Contemplation of death (*maraṇa saññā*);
14. Contemplation of the loathsomeness of food (*āhāre paṭikkūla saññā*);
15. Contemplation of detachment from the whole world (*sabbaloke anabhirata saññā*);
16. Meditation upon a skeleton (*aṭṭhika saññā*);
17. Meditation upon a worm-infested corpse (*pulavaka saññā*);
18. Meditation upon a discolored corpse (*vinīlaka saññā*);
19. Meditation upon a fissured corpse (*vicchiddaka saññā*);
20. Meditation upon a swollen corpse (*uddhumātaka saññā*).

Disciples may either practice any one of the three characteristics (impermanence, suffering, or non-self) individually or they may practice all three of them together as their preliminary exercise. They should meditate in the following manner: "*rūpaṁ aniccaṁ*", or "*rūpaṁ dukkhaṁ*", or "*rūpaṁ anattā*", or simply "*aniccaṁ*", "*dukkhaṁ*", or "*anattā*". Any one of the three characteristics can serve as the subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) in the beginning. When one of the three characteristics is developed to its culmination, the other two follow upon it.

According to the Sub-commentary (*ṭīkā*) on the *Visuddhimagga*, when the contemplation of non-self is sharp, vivid, and clear, the comprehension of the other two characteristics follow it. When the contemplation of suffering is sharp, vivid, and clear, the other two follow it. When the contemplation of impermanence is sharp, vivid, and clear, the other two follow it. Thus, the three subjects are interrelated, for they are the characteristic marks of everything that exists and that is comprehensible.

However, they stand in their own place as regards their individual purpose. When the insight (*vipassanā*) that sees conditioned things as non-self (*anattā*) is developed, the result is the complete removal of wrong views (*micchā-diṭṭhi*, or *diṭṭhi*), for all views are

rooted in the erroneous view of self, and the comprehension of non-self is diametrically opposed to the view of self.

When insight into impermanence (*anicca*) is developed, it removes self-conceit, for, in holding views of permanence, one fosters boastful pride and conceit, like that of Baka Brahmā (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 326), who proudly declared: "This is permanent, this is eternal…" The comprehension of impermanence is in direct opposition to the view of permanence.

When insight into suffering (*dukkha*) is developed, craving (*taṇhā*) is removed, for, when there is the notion of happiness, craving is the result. But, the comprehension of suffering is the direct opposite of craving. Thus, in possessing different functions, each of the three contemplations has its own independent position, although they are inseparably united in that they express the phenomenal characteristics of conditioned existence which forms the subject of meditation.

According to the *Visuddhimagga* (pp. 613—629), there are two kinds of subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) in the *vipassanā* system of meditation, namely, (1) *rūpa-kammaṭṭhāna*, which is practiced by contemplating the three characteristics of the corporeality group (*rūpakkhandha*), and (2) *arūpa-kammaṭṭhāna*, which is practiced by contemplating the three characteristics of the immaterial aggregates (*arūpakkhandha*), or mental states (*vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṁkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*). These are the two divisions of the extensive method of insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*) recorded in the Commentaries.

Disciples who begin with *rūpa-kammaṭṭhāna* contemplate material objects as impermanent, suffering, and not self, considering them from many points of view, such as being subjugated to the law of causality, their relation to time, space, and mental moments. Those who begin with *arūpa-kammaṭṭhāna* contemplate immaterial states (*vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṁkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*), considering their origin, momentary cessation, and relation to physical and mental existence.

When disciples have acquired preliminary insight through both exercises, they should develop it in the way that is mentioned in the section on the earth-*kasiṇa* (*paṭhavī-kasiṇa*) (see Chapter 13), overcoming difficulties by enthusiastic and unwavering resolve, such as, for example, by not stopping before the end is reached, by avoiding unsuitable places, persons, or things, and by seeking out suitable places, persons, or things. Thus, when they are familiar with the *rūpa-kammaṭṭhāna* and *arūpa-kammaṭṭhāna*, there comes to them the profound knowledge of elimination (*pahāna-pariññā*), which begins to arise in the highest stage of mundane (*lokiya*) insight. This knowledge, possessing various functions, develops into eighteen great insights[165] (*aṭṭhārasa mahāvipassanā*), whereby disciples set aside those mental states which are detrimental to higher progress.

The eighteen great insights are:

1. Those who develop the contemplation of impermanence (*anicca*) abandon, or reject, the perception of permanence (*nicca-saññā*).

[165] Also called "insight knowledges".

2. Those who develop the contemplation of pain (*dukkha*) abandon the perception of pleasure (or happiness) (*sukha-saññā*).
3. Those who develop the contemplation of non-self (*anattā*) abandon the perception of self (*atta-saññā*).
4. Those who develop the contemplation of aversion (or disgust) towards worldly life (*nibbidā*) abandon delighting (*nandi*).
5. Those who develop the contemplation of dispassion (*virāga*) abandon passion (*rāga*).
6. Those who develop the contemplation of cessation (*nirodha*) abandon origination (*samudaya*).
7. Those who develop the contemplation of relinquishment (*paṭinissagga*) abandon grasping (or clinging) (*ādāna*).
8. Those who develop the contemplation of destruction (or dissolution) (*khaya*) abandon the perception of solidity (or density, compactness) (*ghana-saññā*).
9. Those who develop the contemplation of the decay (*vaya*) of formations abandon the accumulation of *kamma* (*āyuhana*).
10. Those who develop the contemplation of change (*vipariṇāma*) abandon the perception of lastingness (or stability) (*dhuva-saññā*).
11. Those who develop the contemplation of the signless (*animitta*) abandon the sign (*nimitta*).
12. Those who develop the contemplation of the desireless (*appaṇihita*) abandon desire (or longing) (*paṇidhi*).
13. Those who develop the contemplation of voidness (*suññatā*) abandon clinging to the view of self (*abhinivesa*).
14. Those who develop the insight into higher wisdom and insight (*adhipaññā-dhamma-vipassanā*) abandon misinterpreting due to grasping at a core (*sārādānābhinivesa*).
15. Those who develop correct knowledge and vision regarding the true nature of things (*yathābhūta-ñāṇadassana*) abandon misinterpreting due to confusion (*sammohā-bhinivesa*).
16. Those who develop the contemplation of misery (*ādīnava*) abandon clinging to desire (or attachment) (*ālayābhinivesa*).
17. Those who develop the contemplation of reflection (*paṭisaṁkha*) abandon non-reflection (that is, thoughtlessness regarding impermanence, suffering, and non-self) (*appaṭisaṁkhā*).
18. Those who develop the contemplation on the standstill of existence (*vivaṭṭa*) (that is, separation from the round of births) abandon being entangled in fetters (that is, the tendency towards bringing together the defilements [*kilesa*], which lead to the round of births) (*saṁyogābhinivesa*).

In the course of the development of these eighteen great insights, disciples acquire the complete purity of the wisdom that is still mundane (*lokiya*) and reach the final stage of contemplation which is called "*sammasana-ñāṇa*", "the knowledge of reflection, or determination". Thus, they complete the first stage in the development of insight.

In the second stage, which leads to the manifestation of insight, disciples develop the knowledge and insight into the rise and decay (*udaya-vaya*) of the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*) of present existence. This comprises "*udaya-vaya anupassanā-ñāṇa*", "the knowledge gained by the discernment of the mutability, or rise and decay, of mind and matter" in their present state of existence. As explained in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I, 54), the characteristic of coming to birth is rise (*udaya*), and the characteristic of extinction is decay (*vaya*). Reviewing these two, disciples understand that, prior to the arising, there is no such thing as arrival from a heap, or accumulation. For that which is ceasing, there is no departure into a heap, or accumulation of hidden deposits. Thus, neither in the past nor in the future is there any heap or aggregate from which it comes into existence, or to which it returns. But, it arises in the present due to concurrent causes, that is, the contribution of a series of antecedents towards the production of a total result. This is a further proof that there is no single agent, such as a creator god, as the prime, or original, cause.

When a lute is played, there is the sound, but there is no sound accumulation prior to its arising, nor does it, when it arises, come from a sound accumulation. Neither does the sound which has ceased remain accumulated anywhere. The fact is that, with the combination of the strings, the resonant body and the appropriate action of the player, the sound arises. When the combination is broken, the sound ceases. Just so, all states of mind and matter come to exist as the result of a series of causes, and they disappear with the disappearance of their causes.

Having thus made a brief survey of the rise and fall of mind and matter, disciples proceed to analyze the five aggregates in relation to the causes and conditions of their present existence. They see the matter aggregate (*rūpa*) rising from the causes of ignorance (*avijjā*), craving (*taṇhā*), *kamma*, and material food (*āhāra*). Material food should be regarded here as the stronger cause for the present compared with the others, while ignorance and craving are to be taken as the original causes of *kamma*, which produces and directs the body. To these four characteristics of the rise of the body is added the characteristic of coming to birth. Thus, disciples see the rise of body in these five ways. Furthermore, they see that it is through the cessation of these four causes, together with the momentary changes, that the fall of the body occurs. Thus, in these ten ways, they gain the knowledge and insight into the rise and fall (*udaya-vaya*) of the body, or the material aggregate (*rūpakkhandha*).

Likewise, disciples see the rise and fall of the remaining four aggregates (feeling, perception, [predisposing] mental formations, and consciousness), each in five ways. Thus, disciples see the rise of the five aggregates in twenty-five ways and the fall in twenty-five ways. When they gain knowledge and insight into the rise and fall of the five aggregates from these fifty aspects, the four Noble Truths and the law of causality become more and more evident to them. At this stage, they attain the insight that is called "*taruṇa-vipassanā*", "immature, or budding, insight", and are, therefore, said to be "*āraddha-vipassaka*", "those who have begun their insight".

It is at this stage that the ten corruptions of insight, such as illumination, etc. (as explained in Chapter 27), occur. Overcoming them, disciples continue their practice for

the attainment of the path to *nibbāna* by means of the purification by knowledge and vision of the way, which is termed “*paṭipāda-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*”. ■

PART FOUR

Liberation

29

Vimokkha-Mukha

When disciples have reached the state of attainment to the path of *nibbāna*, the three contemplations, impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*), are said to be the three entrances (*mukha*) to deliverance (*vimokkha*[166]).

In the words of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (II, 48):

> *"There are three entrances to deliverance that lead to release from the world: (1) The full comprehension of all compound phenomena regarding their limit and course [in rise and decay], and the mind rushing [therefrom] into the signless state (animitta-dhātu); (2) the mental agitation [inherent] in all compound phenomena, and the mind rushing [therefrom] into the state without hankering (appaṇihita-dhātu); and (3) the full comprehension of all states as non-self, and the mind rushing [therefrom] into the state of the void (suññata-dhātu). These three entrances to deliverance lead to release from the world."*

Animitta-Vimokkha

Here, the contemplation of impermanence, employed as the means of eliminating the sign of permanence (*nicca-nimitta*), becomes the entrance to deliverance from the sign of erroneous ideas[167] (*vipallāsa-nimitta*). Hence, it is called "*vimokkha-mukha*", "a door, or entrance, to deliverance". This contemplation is developed by reviewing the rising and falling that is natural to all composite phenomena. As a consequence, it frees the mind from the mistake of regarding that which is impermanent (*anicca*) as permanent, which is the sign (*nimitta*) of erroneous ideas (*vipallāsa*). For this reason, it is also called "the contemplation of the signless" (*animittānupassanā*). Disciples who develop insight regarding the signless (*animitta*) through the contemplation of impermanence (*anicca*) become intent upon the object of deliverance and, at the fulfillment of their meditation,

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[166] *Vimokkha* may be translated as "release, deliverance, liberation".

[167] *Vipallāsa* is translated here as "erroneous ideas". It refers to a "perversion", or "distortion", of either perception (*saññā-vipallāsa*) or consciousness (*citta-vipallāsa*) or views (*diṭṭhi-vipallāsa*). It means to regard that which is impermanent (*anicca*) as permanent, that which is painful (*dukkha*) as pleasant, that which is without a self (*anattā*) as a self, and that which is impure (*asubha*) as pure and beautiful. These various *vipallāsas* are called "*nimitta*", "sign". Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), p. 230.

the faculty of faith (*saddhā*), or confidence, becomes the predominant and leading principle. Aided by strong faith, their insight leaves the object of composite phenomena and turns to *nibbāna*, which is called "*animitta-dhātu*", the "signless state". It is so called because it is free from the signs (*nimitta*) of greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), for it is unable to discern any sign of composite phenomena such as form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), or perception (*saññā*). The path that is entered through this insight of the signless (that is, that which has no *vipallāsa*, no "distortion") is called "*animitta-vimokkha*", "the deliverance of the signless", because it is induced by the object of *nibbāna*, "the signless".

Appaṇihita-Vimokkha

The contemplation of suffering, undertaken as a means of eliminating hankering (*appaṇihita*), which is craving (*taṇhā-paṇidhi*), becomes the entrance to deliverance from attachment to worldly existence, which regards as pleasant that which is not pleasant. This contemplation, developed by reviewing suffering, the fearful and dangerous nature of composite phenomena, frees the mind from hankering after them and is, therefore, called "the contemplation of not hankering after" (*appaṇihitānupassanā*). Disciples who develop insight through this contemplation become free from agitation and distraction, and enjoying complete repose and tranquility, and being aided by the faculty of concentration, they attain to the path that is termed "*appaṇihita-vimokkha*", "deliverance from hankering". It is so called because it is induced by the object of *nibbāna*, which is "*appaṇihita*", "free from all hankerings". Thus, the contemplation of *dukkha* becomes the entrance to *appaṇihita-vimokkha*, "deliverance from hankering".

Suññata-Vimokkha

The contemplation of non-self, used as the means of eliminating the delusion (*moha*) of a soul, of individuality, of an ego, or of a self, becomes the entrance to deliverance from the erroneous conception of a permanent personal entity,[168] which is the greatest fetter (*saṁyojana*) of worldly existence. Disciples who develop insight through this contemplation become abundant in wisdom (*paññā*) and full of joy, for they have seen the most profound doctrine of the void (*suññatā*), and their mind becomes established in the understanding of the voidness, or emptiness, of self. They attain to the path that is called "*suññata-vimokkha*", "deliverance of the void". It is so called because it is induced by the object of *nibbāna*, which is termed "*suññata-dhātu*", "being void of self". Thus, the contemplation of non-self (*anattā*) becomes the entrance to *suññata-vimokkha*, "deliverance, or release, through the insight that discerns voidness of self".

This is summarized in the following words (*Paṭisambhidāmagga* II, 58):

[168] Personality belief — the delusion of "selfhood" (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*).

> *"Those who contemplate impermanence, being abundant in faith, attain the deliverance of the signless. Those who contemplate suffering, being abundant in tranquility, attain the deliverance from hankering after. Those who contemplate non-self, being abundant in wisdom, attain the deliverance of the void."*

From what has been said, it should be understood that, in the development of insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*), the consciousness that forms the Noble Path ensues from "insight of discernment leading to emergence" (*vuṭṭhāna-gāminī-vipassanā*), and, according to the *suttanta* teaching, the path is given three names:

1. When insight (*vipassanā*) discerns things as not self (*anattā*), the consciousness leaves "things" and assumes *nibbāna* as its object by way of *suññata-dhātu*, the state of "void of self". Inasmuch as this is the thought of emptiness (*suññatā*) and the path of destroying the taints (*āsava*), it is called "*suññata-vimokkha*", "deliverance, or release, through the insight that discerns voidness of self".

2. When insight discerns composite phenomena (*saṁkhāra*) as impermanent (*anicca*), the consciousness leaves the sign (*nimitta*) of permanence (*nicca*) and assumes *nibbāna* as its object by way of *animitta-dhātu*, "the signless state". Inasmuch as this is the thought of the signless and the path of destroying the taints (*āsava*), it is termed "*animitta-vimokkha*", "deliverance, or release, through the insight that discerns the signless".

3. When insight discerns composite phenomena as unpleasant and undesirable (*asubha*), the consciousness, no longer hankering after them, assumes *nibbāna* as its object by way of *appaṇihita-dhātu*, "the state without hankering". Inasmuch as this is the thought of not hankering after and the path of destroying the taints (*āsava*), it is called "*appaṇihita-vimokkha*", "deliverance, or release, through the insight that discerns not hankering after".

Here, *vimokkha* is applied to the Noble Path (*ariya-magga*), which is given one of these three names according to the course of insight concentration that disciples choose at their entrance.

Three Kinds of Concentration

Inasmuch as there are these three contemplations, which are the entrances to the threefold deliverance, the concentration of *vipassanā* meditation is also threefold: (1) *suññata-samādhi*; (2) *animitta-samādhi*; and (3) *appaṇihita-samādhi* (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* IV, 360; *Anguttara Nikāya* I, 299, and V, 343; *Vinaya* III, 93; etc.). They are also given in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I, 49) and are dealt with at some length in the Commentaries.

When disciples contemplate impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*) in due order and attain *suññata-vimokkha* through the insight into non-self, their concentration is associated with the Noble Path of that deliverance (*vimokkha*). This is known as "*suññata-samādhi*", "concentration through emptiness, or voidness". In the same way, when they attain the Noble Path through the insight into impermanence, the concentration is termed "*animitta-samādhi*", "concentration through the signless". When they attain the Noble Path through the insight without hankering, it is called "*appaṇihita-samādhi*", "concentration through not hankering after". These three types of *samādhi*, being associated with the Noble Path, are given the name "*magga-samādhi*", "path concentration", and, its object being *nibbāna*, this concentration is said to be "*lokuttara*", "supramundane". Since it is associated with fruition, it is termed "*phala-samādhi*", "fruition concentration". Thus, these three types of *samādhi* receive the names *suññata*, "empty, void", *animitta*, "signless", or *appaṇihita*, "without hankering", because of their connection with the three deliverances (*vimokkha*) of the same name, attained by the three contemplations.

The Seven Noble Individuals

In estimating the mental development of disciples, the scriptures distinguish seven types of noble persons (*ariya puggala*) who are at different stages on the path of attaining deliverance. The Kīṭāgiri Sutta (At Kīṭāgiri) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 70) states that the following are the seven types of persons to be found on the path to *nibbāna*:

1. *Saddhānusārī*: one who follows faith;
2. *Saddhāvimutta*: one who is released through faith;
3. *Kāyasakkhī*: one who is a mental realizer;
4. *Ubhatobhāgavimutta*: one who is released in two ways;
5. *Dhammānusārī*: one who follows *dhamma*, "truth";
6. *Diṭṭhippatta*: one who has attained the right view;
7. *Paññāvimutta*: one who is released through full knowledge.

Here, disciples may contemplate compound phenomena as impermanent from the start. However, inasmuch as the path cannot be entered by only contemplating them as impermanent, they should also be contemplated as subject to suffering and as non-self. As disciples thus proceed, emergence into the path may occur at the time when they are reflecting upon impermanence. They are then said to be those who enter into insight through *anicca* and emerge from *anicca* to the path. If, when they are reflecting upon suffering or non-self, emergence occurs, they are said to enter through impermanence and emerge from insight into suffering or non-self. The same is true with regard to entering through suffering and non-self and the remaining kinds of emergence. Here, there are three types of persons: (1) those who enter through impermanence; (2) those who enter through insight into suffering; and (3) and those who enter through non-self. If all three

emerge from impermanence at the same time of attaining the path, their faith becomes strong. When led by the faculty (*indriya*) of faith (*saddhā*), they become delivered by the *animitta vimokkha*, "the deliverance of the signless". At the moment of attaining the first path (*Sotāpatti-magga*), they are called "*saddhānusārī*", "those who follow faith". At the moment of gaining the first path fruition (*Sotāpatti-phala*) and the remaining three paths (*Sakadāgāmi-magga*, *Anāgāmi-magga*, *Arahatta-magga*) and fruitions (*Sakadāgāmi-phala*, *Anāgāmi-phala*, *Arahatta-phala*), they are called "*saddhāvimutta*", "those who are released through faith". Thus, there are three *saddhānusārīs* and seven *saddhāvimuttas*.

If the emergence is from insight into suffering, the three types of persons enjoy supreme tranquility and are led by the faculty (*indriya*) of concentration (*samādhi*). They are delivered by the *appaṇihita-vimokkha*, "deliverance, or release, through the insight that discerns not hankering after" and are called "*kāyasakkhī*", "those who are mental realizers".

Regarding *kāyasakkhī*, we may note the following (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 478):

> *"Here, one contacts with the body and abides in those liberations that are peaceful and immaterial, transcending forms, and some of the taints (āsava) are destroyed by seeing with wisdom. Such a person is called 'kāyasakkhī'."*

In the words of the Commentaries, those who have first attained the formless, or immaterial, absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*) are freed from the body group (*rūpa-kāya*) and later, by removing a part of the mental group (*nāma-kāya*), are released from some of the taints (*āsava*) by way of suppressing (*vikkhambhana*). They have, as it were, glanced at and visualized final deliverance, called "cessation" (*nirodha*), but have not yet fully experienced it physically. Since they have touched it mentally, they are called "*kāya-sakkhī*", "mental realizers", but they are not completely released, since some of the taints still remain. They remain a *kāyasakkhī* from the fruition of the first path up to the path of Arahatship. At the moment of realizing the fruition of that path, they are said to be delivered (cf. the Commentary [III, 188], on *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 478, and the Sub-commentary [*ṭīkā*] on the *Visuddhimagga* 660).

Of the three types of persons who emerge from insight (*vipassanā*) into suffering (*dukkha*), those who have attained Arahatship, emerging from the formless, or immaterial absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*), are called "*ubhatobhāgavimutta*", "those who are released in two ways", that is to say, with the attainment of the formless stage, they are freed from the physical aggregates (*rūpakkhandha*), and, with the attainment of the path, they are released from the mental aggregates (*vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṁkhāra*, *viññāṇa*).

There are five kinds of *ubhatobhāgavimutta*: four who have attained Arahatship by contemplating compound phenomena and emerging from one of the four formless, or immaterial, absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*), and the Non-returner (*Anāgāmi*) who has attained Arahatship, emerging from the state of cessation of feelings and perceptions (that is, *nirodha-samāpatti*).

If these three types of persons emerge from insight into non-self, they acquire penetrating knowledge and are led by the faculty (*indriya*) of wisdom (*paññā*). They are

delivered through the deliverance of "voidness of self" (*suññata-vimokkha*) and are said to be "*dhammānusārī*", "those who follow *dhamma*" on the first path. Here "*dhamma*" means "full knowledge" (*paññā*) (as in *dhamma-vicaya-sambhojjhanga*, "investigation of the truth [*dhamma*] as a factor of full enlightenment"). Preceded by knowledge, they make progress on the path. Hence, they are called "*dhammānusārī*".

The same may be said of those who are "*diṭṭhippatta*", "those who have attained the right view (in six places)", that is, from the fruition of the first path up to the path of Arahatship. Here "*diṭṭhi*" means the realization of the Four Noble Truths.

The following is the definition given in the scriptures:

> *"Here, a person realizes 'this is suffering' as it is, realizes 'this is the cause of suffering' as it is, realizes 'this is the cessation of suffering' as it is, and realizes 'this is the path leading to the cessation of suffering' as it is. Thus, the Truths proclaimed by the Tathāgata are seen, are realized with full knowledge. Such a person is called 'diṭṭhippatta'."*

The same three types of persons are "*paññāvimutta*", "those who are released through full knowledge" at the moment of attaining the highest fruit, that is, Arahatship, the final stage. Such persons are of five kinds: four who have attained Arahatship, emerging from one of the four form, or fine material, absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*), and those who have attained Arahatship by *vipassanā* alone, without practicing the absorptions, a so-called "*sukkhavipassaka*", "a dry-vision seer, or meditator".

Thus, when disciples of insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*) are considered in relation to their various insight entrances to deliverance, they can by divided into seven types, as enumerated in the Kīṭāgiri Sutta (At Kīṭāgiri) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 70). This can be illustrated by the following table:

	7 persons	3 emergences	3 faculties	3 deliverances	8 positions
1	*Saddhānusārī* *Saddhāvimutta*	impermanence (*anicca*)	faculty of faith (*saddhindriya*)	the signless (*animitta*)	the first path (1) the fruit of the first path and the remaining three paths and their fruits (7)
2	*Kāyasakkhī* *Ubhatobhāga-vimutta*	suffering (*dukkha*)	faculty of concentration (*samādhindriya*)	not hankering after (*appaṇihita*)	the four paths and four fruits (8) Arahatship (1)
3	*Dhammānusārī* *Diṭṭhippatta* *Paññāvimutta*	non-self (*anattā*)	faculty of wisdom (*paññindriya*)	voidness (*suññatā*)	the first path (1) the first fruit of the first path; the second and third paths and their fruits; and the Arahat path (6) Arahatship (1)

All these distinct forms of the three deliverances (*vimokkha*), and the seven types of persons, are based upon the development of that insight knowledge of indifference to composite phenomena (*saṁkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*) which gives access to supramundane wisdom. This knowledge is gained in two ways: (1) by the methodical development of concentration through the stages of absorption (*jhāna*), which form the basis of insight (*vipassanā*), or (2) by the development of insight alone, without the experience of *jhāna*. Disciples who have gained it by the first method, which is termed "*samathayāna*", "the path of calm-abiding", attain the Noble Path in two stages: (1) emerging from the tranquility of *jhāna* (*samāpatti*, "the attainments") or (2) emerging from any of the four or five form, or fine material, absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*), used as the basic *jhāna*. Those who have gained it by the second method, which is called pure "*vipassānayāna*", attain the path by means of the development of insight alone. In every case, the position upon the path is said to be determined by this insight knowledge (*ñāṇa*) of *saṁkhārupekkhā*, "indifference to composite phenomena".

If *saṁkhārupekkhā* emerges after the compound phenomena have been contemplated as impermanent (*anicca*), disciples are delivered by *animitta-vimokkha*, "the deliverance of the signless". If it emerges after they have been contemplated as subject to suffering (*dukkha*), disciples are delivered by *appaṇihita-vimokkha*, "deliverance from hankering". If it emerges after they have been contemplated as non-self (*anattā*), disciples are delivered by *suññata-vimokkha*, "deliverance, or release, through the insight that discerns voidness of self". Thus, the path receives one of these three names according to the intrinsic nature of the insight knowledge.

To repeat, it may be attained by abandoning the signs[169] (*nimitta*) of permanence, of stability, and of the eternity of composite phenomena, and by the discernment of impermanence (*anicca*). Hence, it is called "*animitta*", "signless". It may also be attained by eliminating the hankering after the ideal of bliss in the impermanent, through discerning it as suffering (*dukkha*). Hence, it is called "*appaṇihita*", "not hankered after". Finally, it may be attained by rejecting the concept of a self, through discerning non-self (*anattā*) and seeing that all composite phenomena are devoid of a self and anything belonging to a self. Hence it is called "*suññata*", "empty, void". Thus, the path assumes these three names because of the ideas which are opposed to it and have to be eliminated in attaining it.

Moreover, it is called "*suññata*" in the sense that it is devoid of the defilements (*kilesa*) of lust (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*); "*animitta*" through the absence of the signs (*nimitta*) of these defilements; and "*appaṇihita*" through the absence of hankering after these defilements. Thus, the path has three names according to its objects.

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[169] That is to say, by abandoning the outward appearance of permanence, stability, and the eternity of composite phenomena. One who has sense control does not seize upon the general appearance of an object. Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), pp. 126—127.

Finally, this path is attained by aiming at the goal of *nibbāna*, which is "*suññata*" in the sense of emptiness of self; "*animitta*" in the sense of not having the signs of the defilements; and "*appaṇihita*" in the sense of being free from hankering after. Hence, the path is given these names according to its goal.

Just as the path is threefold due to these distinctions, so its fruition is threefold. Both path and fruition are, therefore, termed "*suññata*", "*animitta*", and "*appaṇihita*" in view of their relation to the three deliverance-entrances (*vimokkha-mukha*) of insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*). ■

30

Magga-Ñāṇa

Sotāpatti-Magga

We saw in the previous chapter how insight knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) that views worldly objects[170] with indifference (*upekkhā*) becomes the entrance (*mukha*) to the Noble Path (*ariya-magga*). It is this knowledge that causes the mind of disciples to cross the line that marks the end of mundane (*lokiya*) development and the beginning of supramundane (*lokuttara*) achievement. At this stage, all their previous practices of moral and mental purification have come to bear their real fruition, and the five leading faculties (*indriya*) — (1) faith (*saddhā*); (2) energy (*viriya*); (3) mindfulness (*sati*); (4) concentration (*samādhi*); and (5) full knowledge (*paññā*) — have joined forces to raise them from the lower to the higher position. Disciples are more apt and fit for the moment of great revelation. For the first time in the beginningless round of existences (*saṁsāra*) through which they have passed, they are awaiting the intuitive vision, the knowledge of the path (*magga-ñāṇa*), to behold *nibbāna*, their ultimate goal.

With this in view, disciples once more contemplate composite phenomena (*saṁkhāra*) as impermanent (*anicca*), or suffering (*dukkha*), or non-self (*anattā*) with the knowledge of indifference to composite phenomena (*saṁkhārupekkhā*), and, at the end of the thought process of this contemplation, *saṁkhārupekkhā* lapses into the subconscious life continuum (*bhavanga*). Immediately after the *bhavanga* moment, the mind door cognition (*manodvāra-āvajjana*) arises along with the thought that compound phenomena are impermanent, or suffering, or non-self, just as *saṁkhārupekkhā* had done before the *bhavanga* moment. Then, immediately after this moment of operative consciousness that has arisen, setting *bhavanga* into motion, there arises the first impulsive moment (*javana*), forming an unbroken thought process[171] (*cittavīthi*) that has as its object the same composite phenomena (*saṁkhāra*), considered as impermanent, or suffering, or non-self. This *javana* moment is called "*parikamma*", "preliminary, or preparatory". Following this, the second *javana* moment arises, repeating the same object. This is called "*upacāra*", "access". This, in turn, is followed by the third *javana* moment, which is termed "*anuloma*", "adaptation". It is this third *javana* moment that is designated "*anuloma-ñāṇa*", "adaptation knowledge", the last of the insight knowledges that arise in the stage of purification by knowledge and vision of the way (*paṭipadā-ñāṇadassana-*

[170] That is, composite phenomena (*saṁkhāra*).
[171] Also called "mental process".

visuddhi). It is said to be the culmination of the *vipassanā* meditation connected with worldly objects. It is with this *anuloma* that the knowledge of *saṁkhārupekkhā* becomes the entrance to the Noble Path. Immediately after the *anuloma* moment, there arises the mind moment called "*gotrabhū*", "change of lineage", literally, the knowledge that transcends, or overcomes, the rank of worldling (*puthujjana-gotta*), as well as the lower position at each successive stage of the Noble Path, and visualizes *nibbāna*.

This process is described as follows in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I, 66):

> *"How does full knowledge turning into the Noble Path from external objects become the knowledge of gotrabhū (change of lineage)? It overcomes (abhibhuyyati) the rising [of composite phenomena (saṁkhāra)], hence, it is gotrabhū. It overcomes existence, it overcomes decay, and it overcomes despair, hence, it is gotrabhū. It overcomes the external objective sign of saṁkhāra, hence, it is gotrabhū. ... Having overcome existence, it rushes into non-existence,*[172] *into nibbāna, hence, it is gotrabhū."*

In its technical sense, "*gotrabhū*" may be rendered "suggestive", for its purpose is to suggest to the mind that worldly objects be abandoned and that *nibbāna* be adopted as its object instead. The psychological value of *gotrabhū* is that it stands at the point of turning to the Noble Path (*ariya-magga*), forming, as it were, the dividing line between the world and *nibbāna*. Hence, it is neither a part of the insight knowledges (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) nor does it appertain to the knowledge of the path. However, it is associated with the insight process as a mental action, pointing out *nibbāna* as the object to the mind. It should, therefore, be regarded as insight (cf. the Sub-commentary [*ṭīkā*] on the *Visuddhimagga* 672).

Adaptation (*anuloma*) and change of lineage (*gotrabhū*) thus arise one after the other from one mind door cognition (*manodvāra-āvajjana*) in a single thought process (*cittavīthi*), running through one of the three *vipassanā* objects, impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*), towards the path to *nibbāna*. Here, adaptation knowledge (*anuloma-ñāṇa*) arises two or three times, strengthening itself by repetition. By its very nature, it dispels the thick darkness of ignorance (*avijjā*) that obscures the Four Noble Truths (*ariya-sacca*). The consciousness of the disciples who possess this knowledge no longer clings to composite phenomena (*saṁkhāra*) but slips away from them like a dewdrop slips away from a lotus leaf. All composite phenomena and their very existence appear to them as an impediment. Then, at the end of the second or third *anuloma*, there arises in them the knowledge of *gotrabhū*, visualizing, for the first time, the state of the unconditioned (*asankhata-dhātu*), the bliss of *nibbāna*. Just as a man beholds with his eyes the pure moon when the sky is clear of clouds, disciples are able to see *nibbāna* with *gotrabhū* knowledge (*gotrabhū-ñāṇa*) when the truth-hiding darkness is cleared away by adaptation knowledge (*anuloma-ñāṇa*). *Gotrabhū* knowledge, having shown *nibbāna*, ceases, as it were, after giving a sign, or hint (*saññā*), to the Noble Path

[172] That is, the end of the round of rebirths (*saṁsāra*).

to arise. Then, the Noble Path, arising according to the given sign in the same thought process (*cittavīthi*), penetrates and breaks up the mental defilements (*kilesa*) of greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*).

Thus arises the knowledge of the First Path, called "*Sotāpatti*", "attaining to the stream" (that is, Stream-Entry or Stream-Winning), which breaks the first three fetters (*saṁyojana*) of lower existence, namely, (1) false views concerning the self (personality belief) (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), (2) doubt (*vicikicchā*) concerning the efficacy of the religious life, and (3) adherence to rites and rituals (*sīlabbata-parāmāsa*) wrongly considered as the means of release, or deliverance (*vimokkha*). Therefore, the knowledge of this shuts all the gates of evil doom, rejects the wrong paths, and quiets all animosities and fears. At this stage, disciples are said to be the first type of "noble individual" (*ariya-puggala*), one who has entered the stream (*Sotāpanna*, "Stream-Enterer", or "Stream-Winner").

Immediately after the knowledge of the first path (*Sotāpatti*), there arise, as a result, two or three mind moments (*cittakkhaṇa*) called "fruitions" (*phala*) in which the bliss of *nibbāna* is experienced. It is produced by the complete cessation of the defilements (*kilesa*) just mentioned (greed, hatred, and delusion). This occurs because the transcendental state of concentration gives immediate (*akālika*) results, as is stated (*Sutta Nipāta*, Ratana Sutta, verse 226):

> *"The Supreme Buddha praised pure meditation, which gives instantaneous results. There is nothing equal to that meditation."*

Also (*Anguttara Nikāya* II, 149):

> *"For the extinction of the taints (āsava), one attains that which gives immediate results*[173] *(ānantarika)."*

At this resulting stage, disciples become a Stream-Winner (*Sotāpanna*), the second type of Noble Individual,[174] who is free from unhappy (*apāya*) existence. Moreover, however much they may delay in attaining the remaining paths (*Sakadāgāmi*, *Anāgāmi*, *Arahat*), they are limited at most to only seven more births (*sattakkhattuparama*) in the plane of celestial beings and humans. Within these seven births, they will be able to bring an end to suffering (*dukkha*), to attain final *nibbāna*.

All these states are attained within the period of two mind moments (*cittakkhaṇa*), when the knowledge of *saṁkhārupekkhā* has produced the thought process of the path (*magga-cittavīthi*), which contains seven mind moments called "*javana*", "impulse moments". As stated above, the insight knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) of indifference to composite phenomena (*saṁkhārupekkhā*) lapses into the stream of the subconscious life continuum (*bhavanga*) at the end of each contemplation. That is to say, when the mind is concentrated by meditating on impermanence (*anicca*), or suffering (*dukkha*), or non-self

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[173] That is, the Noble Path (*ariya-magga*).

[174] That is, one who has both attained to the path (*Sotāpatti-magga*) and experienced the fruition (*Sotāpatti-phala*) of Stream-Winning (*Sotāpatti*).

(*anattā*), it falls into the original state of *bhavanga* with the object of *saṁkhāra*. Through the power of previous repetition, mind door cognition takes it into the active process to run through the same object just contemplated (composite phenomena [*saṁkhāra*]) as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. Then, there arise, in due order, seven impulse moments (*javana*), the first three of which are adaptation (*anuloma*), the fourth is change of lineage (*gotrabhū*), the fifth is the path (*magga*), and the remaining two are fruitions (*phala*). In accordance with their individual position, the first of the three *anuloma* moments is termed "preliminary" (*parikamma*), the second "access" (*upacāra*), and the third "adaptation" (*anuloma*). Strictly speaking, they are the repetition of the same *javana* whose object still appertains to *saṁkhāra*. But, at the moment of *gotrabhū*, the external object of *saṁkhāra* is omitted, and *nibbāna* becomes the object. Following that object, the fifth moment becomes the path of visualizing the *nibbāna* state.

Immediately after the path (*magga*) is attained, the fruition (*phala*) is experienced in the next two moments. At the conclusion of the fruition mind moments, the mind returns to the *bhavanga* state, and, then, it arises in retrospection (*paccavekkhaṇa*) to reflect upon the new experience of the path (*magga*), its fruition (*phala*), and *nibbāna*, and to survey the mental defilements (*kilesa*) that have been eliminated and those that remain. The state of the psychological processes of the path and the retrospection are illustrated in the following two tables:

Table 1: Thought Process of the Path

					Saṁkhāra				*Nibbāna*							
Kamma					Object →				Object				*Kamma*			
BH	BH	BH	VI	CP	MD	PR	AC	AD	CL	PA	FR	FR	BH	BH	BH	BH
aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep
						1	2	3	4	5	6	7				

Key: BH = *Bhavanga* moment
VI = Its vibration
CP = Change of process
MD = Mind door cognition
PR = Preliminary (*parikamma*), or preparatory, moment
AC = Access (*upacāra*) moment
AD = Adaptation (*anuloma*) moment
CL = Change of lineage (*gotrabhū*) moment
PA = The path (*magga*) moment
FR = Fruition (*phala*) moment

a = The arising moment
e = The existing moment
p = The passing moment
1—7 = *javana* moments

Seventeen groups of arising (a), existing (e), and passing (p) moments are the usual number of mind moments (*cittakkhaṇa*) that make up the thought process (*cittavīthi*). BH indicates the life continuum (*bhavanga*), based upon the previous *kamma*, that has given birth to this existence. Numbers 1—7 indicate the seven impulse moments (*javana*) of the path process, while numbers 1—3 indicate the three adaptation moments,

preliminary (*parikamma*) (PR), access (*upacāra*) (AC), and adaptation (*anuloma*) (AD). The arrow (→) indicates that the mind which has *saṁkhāra* as its object leaves it at the end of the third adaptation (*anuloma*) (AD) moment and assumes *nibbāna* in the change of lineage (*gotrabhū*) (CL) moment, and disciples, thereupon, attain to the rank of a noble individual (*ariya-puggala*), surpassing all worldly (*lokiya*) conditions. The next three mind moments, the path (*magga*) (PA) and the two moments of fruition (*phala*) (FR), are to be understood as supramundane (*lokuttara*). This process shows the state of mind of disciples who are of average intuition, at the attainment of the first path (*Sotāpanna*). In the thought process of those who are of quick intuition, there arise only two adaptation moments, and, in this case, there are three fruition moments.

In the attainment of the three higher paths (*Sakadāgāmi*, *Anāgāmi*, *Arahat*), the thought process (*cittavīthi*) is the same as in that of the first path (*Sotāpatti*). According to the explanation of the later commentators, the change of lineage (*gotrabhū*) moment in the higher paths receives the special name "*vodāna*", "the moment of cleansing". The term "*vodāna*" is mentioned in the *Paṭṭhāna* (II, 159) as an equivalent of "*gotrabhū*", and, in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I, 162; 180), it is applied to the insight knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) of the path and its fruition in the sense of "cleansing". This distinction may be due to the fact that each of the three higher paths can be attained by those who have attained the previous lower division of the state of *ariya* and have gained the first path (*Sotāpatti*) by overcoming the rank of an ordinary worldling (*puthujjana-gotta*). But, *gotrabhū* implies the psychological moment that transcends the lower state in the process of evolution of the path and has *nibbāna* as its definite object.

According to the scriptures, *gotrabhū* is applied to the ten states that are the successive results of insight knowledge as described below (*Paṭisambhidāmagga* I, 68):

> *"What ten states of gotrabhū arise by way of insight? For the purpose of attaining to the path of Stream-Winning (Sotāpatti), it overcomes the sign, the external object of saṁkhāra, hence, gotrabhū. For the purpose of attaining to the fruit of Stream-Winning, it overcomes the sign, the external object of saṁkhāra, hence, gotrabhū. For the purpose of attaining to the path of Once-Returning (Sakadāgāmi), it overcomes the sign, the external object of saṁkhāra, hence, gotrabhū. For the purpose of attaining to the fruit of Once-Returning, it overcomes the sign, the external object of saṁkhāra, hence, gotrabhū. For the purpose of attaining to the path of Non-Returning (Anāgāmi), it overcomes the sign, the external object of saṁkhāra, hence, gotrabhū. For the purpose of attaining to the fruit of Non-Returning, it overcomes the sign, the external object of saṁkhāra, hence, gotrabhū. For the purpose of attaining to the path of Arahatship, it overcomes the sign, the external object of saṁkhāra, hence, gotrabhū. For the purpose of attaining to the fruit of Arahatship, it overcomes the sign, the external object of saṁkhāra, hence, gotrabhū. For the purpose of the abode attaining into the state of voidness (suññatā), it overcomes the sign, the external object of saṁkhāra, hence, gotrabhū. For the purpose of attaining to the*

> *state of the signless (animitta), it overcomes the sign, the external object of saṁkhāra, hence, gotrabhū."*

Thus, *gotrabhū* is common to all stages of the development of the Noble Path, and, in the *Visuddhimagga*, it is called "*vuṭṭhāna-gāminī vipassanā*", "insight leading to ascent (on the path)". As noted above, it is also called "*vodāna*", "the moment of cleansing". It arises at the stage of purification by knowledge and vision of the way (*paṭipadā-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*) and is followed immediately by the change of lineage moment (*gotrabhū-citta*) and the entrance into the supramundane paths.

Table 2: Retrospective Process of the Path and Fruition

Kamma							Reflections							*Kamma*		
BH	BH	BH	BH	VI	CP	MD	JA	JA	JA	JA	JA	JA	JA	BH	BH	BH
aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep	aep
							1	2	3	4	5	6	7			

Key: BH = *Bhavanga* moment
VI = Its vibration
CP = Change of process
MD = Mind door cognition
JA = *Javana* moments

a = The arising moment
e = The existing moment
p = The passing moment
1—7 = *javana* moments

Here, at the conclusion of the second thought moment of fruition, as shown in Table 1, the consciousness of the Noble One lapses into the life continuum (*bhavanga*) (BH), and, then, cutting off the *bhavanga* stream (CP), mind door cognition (MD) arises in order to reflect on the path. Again, lapsing into the life continuum, it arises anew in the same manner in order to reflect on the fruit. In this way, the noble disciples who are Stream-Winners (*Sotāpanna*) reflect on five things: (1) the path; (2) the fruition; (3) the defilements that have been eliminated; (4) the defilements remaining; and (5) *nibbāna*. These five reflections are known as "*paccavekkhaṇa-ñāṇa*", "retrospective knowledge", and, with Once-Returners (*Sakadāgāmi*) and Non-Returners (*Anāgāmi*), they are the same. But, for *Arahats*, there is no reflection on remaining defilements, inasmuch as they are free from them all. In every case, the thought process is the same as that given above. Thus, there are, in all, nineteen retrospective knowledges unique to the Noble Ones.

Sakadāgāmi-Magga

After the five retrospections, the *Sotāpanna* disciples, at that time or at some subsequent time, apply themselves to the attenuation, or lessening, of two additional fetters (*saṁyojana*), (4) desire for gratification of the senses (*kāma-rāga*) and (5) ill-will (*vyāpāda*), that is to say, to inhibit them, preventing their frequent arising and

domination, in order to reach the second path, *Sakadāgāmi-magga*, "the path of Once-Returner".

Summoning the five spiritual faculties (*indriya*), the five powers (*bala*), and the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhanga*), they contemplate the same conditioned aggregates (*khandha*) of materiality (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), (predisposing) mental factors (*saṁkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*), as impermanent (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). Reflecting on them, analyzing them by means of insight knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*), they come to the insight process. As stated above in connection with the end of *saṁkhārupekkhā*, "indifference to composite phenomena", through one thought moment (*cittakkhaṇa*) of cognition, there arise adaptation (*anuloma*) and change of lineage (*gotrabhū*). Immediately after *gotrabhū*, the *Sakadāgāmi-magga*, "the path of Once-Returning", arises. It results in the attenuation of two additional fetters, (4) desire for gratification of the senses (*kāma-rāga*) and (5) ill-will (*vyāpāda*). It is followed by two or three fruition conscious moments associated with the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths and the vision of the bliss of *nibbāna*. At the stage of the path moment (*Sakadāgāmi-magga*), disciples are said to be the third noble individual (*ariya-puggala*), and, after the experience of the fruition (*Sakadāgāmi-phala*), they are the fourth noble individual, who has only one more rebirth in the plane of sensory experience. Hence, they are called "*Sakadāgāmi*", "one who is bound to return once more", provided that they do not make an end of all suffering in their present life-time.

Anāgāmi-Magga

After the five retrospections, the *Sakadāgāmi* disciples, at that time or at some subsequent time, apply themselves to the complete destruction of the residue of the two additional fetters (*saṁyojana*), (4) desire for gratification of the senses (*kāma-rāga*) and (5) ill-will (*vyāpāda*), and to the attainment of the third path, *Anāgāmi-magga*, "the path of Non-Returning". Contemplating composite phenomena as impermanent, suffering, and non-self, they direct their mind to penetrate into the insight process. As they thus proceed, the path process arises in the manner described above. They are then entirely free from the plane of sensory experience and become the sixth noble individual, known as "*Anāgāmi*", "one who is bound not to return (to rebirth in a sensory plane)". If *Anāgāmi* disciples do not reach final attainment (Arahatship) in their present life, they are bound to be reborn in one of the pure abodes (*sukhāvāsa*) of the *brahma*-world, provided that they have practiced the fourth form, or fine material, absorption (*rūpajjhāna*), or in one of the lower *brahma*-worlds if they have only practiced the lower absorptions. There, they attain *parinibbāna* in due course. They are described (*Anguttara Nikāya* IV, 2) as being "of apparitional or spontaneous arising (*opapātika*), that is, one independent of parents; and passing away from there, they enter final *nibbāna*, not liable to return."

Arahatta-Magga

After the five retrospections, the *Anāgāmi* disciples apply themselves to the complete elimination of the five remaining fetters (*saṁyojana*), namely, (6) craving for fine-material existence (*rūpa-rāga*); (7) craving for immaterial existence (*arūpa-rāga*); (8) conceit (*māna*); (9) restlessness (*uddhacca*); and (10) ignorance (*avijjā*). When they progress in the same course of meditation (*bhāvanā*) through the processes of the insight knowledges, the knowledge of *saṁkhārupekkhā* lapses into *bhavanga*. Cutting off *bhavanga*, in one flash of thought, there arise adaptation (*anuloma*) and change of lineage (*gotrabhū*) one after the other, and, immediately after *gotrabhū*, the conscious moment of the supreme path supervenes, bringing all the residue of the fetters (*saṁyojana*) and taints (*āsava*) to complete destruction. Next, two or three moments of fruition (*phala*) follow, at the end of which disciples become the eighth noble individual, the "*Arahat*", "the Worthy, or Perfect One", who is purged of all impurities and released from the burden, one who has destroyed all worldly fetters, attained the final state, and won the goal — the bliss of deliverance (*vimokkha*).

During the process of retrospection, *Arahats* reflect on the path that they have traversed, the fruit that they have attained, *nibbāna* that they have realized, and the defilements (*kilesa*) that they have destroyed. They see that there are no additional defilements to be expelled and that there is nothing more to be done. Thus comes the knowledge of emancipation when they have been emancipated (*vimuttasmiṁ vimuttaṁ iti ñāṇaṁ hoti*). This final emancipation, attained through the systematic development of the knowledge of the four Noble Paths, marks the culmination of the purification by knowledge and vision (*ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*), and it is also the culmination of the extensive course of Buddhist meditation which has been expounded as the means of self-enlightenment, the only way to the true destiny of man. ■

31

Full Enlightenment

When disciples have reached the stage of Arahatship through the knowledge of the Four Noble Paths (*ariya-magga*), the long course of their pilgrimage towards perfection has brought them by degrees to full enlightenment and, thereby, to the everlasting bliss of *nibbāna*. Entering the Stream (*Sotāpatti*), which implies a whole-hearted acceptance of the teachings of the *Buddha* and its intensification of the inner qualities of enlightenment, is the first step on the path to *nibbāna*.

At this stage, disciples, being endowed with the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiya*), possess a newly awakened force of mindfulness (*sati*), a well-established strength, and a supernormal power which makes their mind receptive and supple. Consequently, they are led to the dominant influence of the will to fulfill their ambition, and, with the overcoming of doubt, idleness, negligence, distraction, and confusion, their mental faculties of faith, energy, thoughtfulness, concentration, and wisdom become keen and powerful. All these qualities have united with rapture (zest, ecstasy), tranquility, and equanimity for the purpose of self-illumination. Held together by the power of moral purity, these spiritual qualities become the principles of the Noble Eightfold Path that has been equated in the previous stage with the threefold training (morality [*sīla*], concentration [*samādhi*], and wisdom [*paññā*]) and, in this stage, leads to *nibbāna* in four degrees of noble attainment. Thus, these three mental qualities, which are developed prior to the path in various classes of consciousness, are consolidated in one consciousness and proceed in two directions, calm abiding (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*), at the time when the knowledge of the Noble Path (*magga-ñāṇa*) arises.

The combined effect of the development of these supernormal mental qualities is to purge the mind of all faults and weaknesses, spiritualizing its naturally pure essence, which is said to be pure, clear, and luminous (*pabhassara*). An ever increasing range of spiritual enlightenment is afforded by these qualities, for they tend to eliminate all mental defilements (*kilesa*) in proportion to their intensity. When disciples attain the four stages of the path successively, the power and activity of these qualities is increased, their effort grows more and more intense, and the result of their effort becomes greater as a consequence.

As explained in the *Visuddhimagga*, the four knowledges of the path eliminate the following lower tendencies and worldly states of mind, which are cited in the scriptures as: "fetters (*saṁyojana*); corruptions, or mental defilements (*kilesa*); states of wrongness (*micchatta*); despondency (*paṭigaha*) and servitude (*anunaya*) to worldly states; avarice,

stinginess, or meanness (*macchariya*); erroneous ideas (*vipallāsa*); ties (*gantha*); injustice (*agata*); taints (*āsava*); floods (*ogha*); yokes (*yoga*); hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*); infections (*parāmasa*); grasping (*upādāna*); proclivities, or tendencies (*anusaya*); stains (*mala*); course of unwholesome actions (*akusala-kammapatha*); and unwholesome states of consciousness (*akusala-cittupāda*)."

Herein, the fetters (*saṁyojana*) are ten in number, the first three of which — (1) false views concerning the self (personality belief) (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*); (2) doubt (*vicikicchā*) concerning the efficacy of the religious life; and (3) adherence to rites and rituals (*sīlabbata-parāmāsa*) wrongly considered as the means of release, or deliverance (*vimokkha*) — are conquered by the knowledge of the first path, that of *Sotāpatti*, "Stream-Entry", or "Stream-Winning". The next two — (4) desire for gratification of the senses (*kāma-rāga*) and (5) ill-will (*vyāpāda*) —, which are gross, are weakened by the knowledge of the second path, that of *Sakadāgāmi*, "Once-Returning". The residue of these two fetters is completely conquered by the knowledge of the third path, that of *Anāgāmi*, "Non-Returning". The remaining five fetters — (6) craving for fine-material existence (*rūpa-rāga*); (7) craving for immaterial existence (*arūpa-rāga*); (8) conceit (*māna*); (9) restlessness (*uddhacca*); and (10) ignorance (*avijjā*) — are conquered by the knowledge of the fourth path, that of *Arahat*, "the Worthy, or Perfect One".

Among the mental defilements (*kilesa*), which are ten in number — (1) greed (*lobha*); (2) hatred (*dosa*); (3) delusion (*moha*); (4) conceit (*māna*); (5) speculative views (*diṭṭhi*); (6) skeptical doubt (*vicikicchā*); (7) mental torpor (*thīna*); (8) restlessness, or mental agitation (*uddhacca*); (9) shamelessness (*ahirika*); and (10) lack of moral dread, or unconscientiousness (*anottappa*) —, speculative views and skeptical doubt are conquered by the knowledge of the first path, hatred by the knowledge of the third path, and the mental states of greed, delusion, mental torpor, mental agitation, shamelessness, and lack of moral dread by the knowledge of the fourth path.

Among the worldly states, the despondency involved in loss, misfortune, blame, and suffering is conquered by the knowledge of the third path, and the servitude of fawning involved in seeking gain, fortune, praise, and pleasure is conquered by the knowledge of the fourth path.

All avarice, stinginess, or meanness, concerned with dwellings, kinsfolk, gain, learning, and personal beauty are conquered by the knowledge of the first path.

Among the erroneous ideas, the perceptions, thoughts, and views that regard what is impermanent as permanent, not-self as self, and suffering as happiness, are conquered by the knowledge of the first path. The erroneous idea of the perception and thought that considers what is impure as pure is conquered by the knowledge of the fourth path.

The evil tendencies to injustice based upon partiality, ill-will, fear, and ignorance, are conquered by the knowledge of the first path.

Among the taints, that of wrong views is conquered by the knowledge of the first path. The taint of sense desire is conquered by the third knowledge. The taint of (desiring eternal) existence and ignorance are conquered by the knowledge of fourth path, as are the floods (*ogha*) and yokes (*yoga*).

Among the five hindrances, skeptical doubt is conquered by the knowledge of the first path, and desire for gratification of the senses and ill-will and distraction, by the knowledge of the third path. Sloth and torpor and mental agitation, or excitement, are conquered by the knowledge of the fourth path.

Among the proclivities, or tendencies, speculative views and skeptical doubt are conquered by the knowledge of the first path. Sensuous greed and hatred are conquered by the third knowledge. Tendencies of conceit, craving for existence, and ignorance are conquered by the knowledge of the fourth path.

Among the three stains, hatred is conquered by the knowledge of the third path, and craving and ignorance are conquered by the knowledge of the fourth path.

As for the course of unwholesome actions, killing, stealing, adultery, false speech, and wrong views are conquered by the knowledge of the first path. Slandering, harsh words, and ill-will are conquered by the third path. Frivolous talk and covetousness are conquered by fourth path.

Among the unwholesome states of consciousness, the five, namely, the four associated with views and accompanied by craving (*taṇhā*) and that associated with doubt accompanied by ignorance (*avijjā*), are conquered by the knowledge of the first path. The two associated with hatred are conquered by the knowledge of the third path. The remaining five, namely, four dissociated from views and accompanied by craving and that associated with distraction accompanied by ignorance, are conquered by the knowledge of the fourth path.

Thus, at the time of entering the knowledge of the four Noble Paths, all lower tendencies of mind are destroyed once and for all, and the mind has now reached the state of full enlightenment.

In the process of evolution towards enlightenment, each of the knowledges of the four paths has, at one and the same moment, four functions: (1) understanding; (2) letting go, or elimination; (3) realization; and (4) cultivation. These four simultaneous functions correspond to the Four Noble Truths (*ariya-sacca*). The knowledge of the path simultaneously comprehends the Four Noble Truths in four ways: (1) it comprehends the truth of suffering (*dukkha*) by understanding it; (2) the truth of its cause (*samudaya*) by letting go of it; (3) the truth of the cessation (*nirodha*) of suffering by realizing it; and (4) the truth of the path (*magga*) by cultivating it.

As stated in the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (V, 437):

> *"Monks, those who see suffering also see the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path leading to the cessation of suffering."*

Also the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I, 119):

> *"The knowledge of those who have attained the path is also the knowledge of suffering, of the cause of suffering, of the cessation of suffering, and of the path leading to the cessation of suffering."*

When the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiya*), which are fully developed in the course of the threefold training, have united with equal strength in the path consciousness, the path knowledge supervenes, fulfilling the four functions of realizing the Four Noble Truths. Then, disciples have finished their course in four ways: (1) they have realized that which is to be realized; (2) they have eliminated that which is to be eliminated; (3) they have practiced that which is to be practiced; and (4) they have attained that which is to be attained. Being endowed with the three kinds of mundane (*lokiya*) full comprehensions, or full understandings (*pariññā*), namely, (1) the full comprehension gained by the complete realization of the things which are to be realized (*ñāta-pariññā*); (2) the full comprehension gained by the complete investigation of the things which are to be investigated (*tīraṇa-pariññā*); and (3) the full comprehension gained by the complete elimination of the things which are to be eliminated (*pahāna-pariññā*), disciples have now reached their goal, full enlightenment in the bliss of *nibbāna*.

Herewith ends the development of full comprehension (*pariññā*) in the system of insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*). ■

32

Iddhi-Vidhā

From the survey given in the previous chapters, it has been shown that meditation (*bhāvanā*), as a means of self-development, is a positive, dynamic force that leads to self-enlightenment, and not a mere negative escape from the uncertainties of life. It is, in fact, the consummate means of awakening the spiritual tendencies of men and women, so that they obtain two advantages: (1) absolute freedom from evil tendencies and (2) the supernormal power of spiritual wisdom.

With the steady intensification of concentration during *samādhi* meditation, the mind becomes free from the lower impulses and sensory emotions, and, thus, by overcoming hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*), achieves "negative goodness". The self-complacency of negative goodness is inevitably replaced by a living force of higher development which eventually gives rise to "positive goodness". When the mind is well established in this positive goodness, it becomes a most admirable instrument which is apt and fit for superhuman activities and visions that would appear as miracles to ordinary beings.

The scriptures state that disciples of meditation can become skilled in superhuman qualities (*uttari-manussa-dhamma*), which are the supernormal advantages of their practice. Disciples who have practiced the *jhāna* method of meditation receive, in their lifetime, the happiness of experiencing *samāpatti*, "the attainment of the ecstatic state of mental quiescence". In addition to this, those who have practiced the *kasiṇa* methods (see Chapter 13) receive, as supernormal advantages, the powers of *abhiññā*, "higher, or special, knowledge" (see Chapter 33). The *Visuddhimagga* explains these advantages in detail, and the following account is taken from that work.

In reply to the question, "what are the advantages of developing concentration?", the *Visuddhimagga* explains that there are five advantages of *samādhi* meditation:

1. A happy life here and now (*diṭṭhadhamma-sukha-vihāra*): For *Arahats* who attain ecstatic concentration (*jhānasamāpatti*) with the thought: "With collected mind, we shall live in bliss the entire day," it brings a happy life in the present existence. Hence, it is said (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 41):

   "Cunda, ecstasies in the discipline of the Noble Ones are not called 'vacuities' (sallekha), but 'happiness' in this visible lifetime."

2. Insight into composite phenomena (*saṁkhāra*): To those disciples who, rising from the attainments of *jhāna*, develop concentration with the thought: "With concentrated mind, I shall have insight into composite phenomena," the development of *samādhi* brings insight (*vipassanā*) as its advantage. Hence, the Blessed One said (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* III, 13):

   "Monks, develop concentration. A Monk who is concentrated knows things as they really are."

3. Higher knowledge (*abhiññā*): To those who have reached the eight attainments (*samāpatti*), that is, the four form, or fine material, absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*) and the four formless, or immaterial, absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*), the development of ecstatic concentration, which is the proximate cause of higher knowledge, brings higher knowledge as their advantage. Hence, the Holy One said (*Anguttara Nikāya* I, 255):

   "Whenever those [who have developed ecstatic concentration] direct their mind to things realizable by higher knowledge, they achieve the capacity of realizing those things whenever the necessary conditions (āyatana) exist in them."

4. Rebirth (*paṭisandhi*) in the *brahma*-world: Those persons who have developed *jhāna*, but who have not attained Arahatship, take rebirth in the *brahma*-world, whether they desire it or not, according to the state of *jhāna* they have attained.

   As stated in the *Vibhanga* (424), developing the first absorption (*jhāna*) to a small extent, one attains companionship in the *brahma*-assembly (*brahma-pārisajja*), or Brahmā's retinue. Those who have practiced to a greater degree are reborn in the plane of Brahmā's ministers (*brahma-purohita*). Those who have practiced to the highest degree are bound for the state of the Great Brahmā (Mahā Brahmā).

   In like manner, the second absorption (*jhāna*) leads to the planes of minor luster (*parittābha*), of infinite luster (*appamāṇābha*), and of radiant (*ābhassara*) *brahmas*, from whose bodies rays of light are emitted like flashes of lightning.

   The third absorption (*jhāna*) leads to the planes of minor illumination (*paritta-subha*), of infinite illumination (*appamāṇasubha*), and of mass illumination (*subha-kiṇha*).

   Finally, the fourth absorption (*jhāna*) leads to the planes of the great fruit (*vehapphala*), of the realm of unconscious beings (*asaññathala*), and the five pure abodes (*suddhāvāsa*), namely, the abodes of the immobile (*aviha*), the serene (*atappa*), the beautiful (*sudassa*), the exquisite (*sudassi*), and the supreme (*akaniṭṭha*). These five planes are the special abodes of those pure beings who are Non-Returners (*Anāgāmi*).

5. Attainment of complete cessation (*nirodha*) of mental activities: Those Non-Returners (*Anāgāmi*) and *Arahats* who have fulfilled the eight *jhāna* attainments, abide during their lifetime, attaining to the cessation of all mental activities (*nirodha-*

samāpatti), where they can remain for up to seven days without consciousness, in the state of the bliss of *nibbāna*. The development of ecstatic concentration brings to them this advantage.

Such are the five advantages of the development of concentration.

An amplification of the third advantage, cited as higher knowledge, has been developed into five branches of supernormal intellection known as "*abhiññā*", the term generally applied to the power of the higher mind which is developed through the practice of absorption (*jhāna*) in *samādhi* meditation (see Chapter 33). The first knowledge is based on the performance of various kinds of supernormal powers known as "*iddhi-vidhā*",[175] which were summarized by the *Buddha* in the following formula in order to show the immediate result of the systematic development of meditation, and also the hidden power of the human mind (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 77—78; *Majjhima Nikāya* II, 18):

> *"With his mind thus concentrated [in the fourth jhāna], purified and cleansed, without blemishes, with defilements gone, ready to act, firm and established, he applies and directs his mind to the method of supernormal accomplishment (iddhi-vidhā). He experiences a variety of supernormal powers (iddhi): 'being one, he becomes many, and, having become many, he becomes one; he appears and disappears at will; he passes through fences, walls, and mountains unhindered as if through air; he dives into the ground and emerges from it as if it were water; he walks on the water without breaking the surface as if on land; he flies cross-legged through the sky like a bird with wings; he even touches and strokes with his hand the sun and the moon, mighty and powerful as they are; and he travels in the body as far as the brahma-world'."*

Iddhi, usually rendered as "supernormal power" or "psychic power", implies both mental and physical powers in that it is the potential energy leading to accomplishment, success, prosperity, etc.[176]

The *Visuddhimagga* enumerates ten kinds of supernormal powers (*iddhi*), and these are listed in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (II, 205) as well; thus:

1. The *iddhi* of will-power (*adhiṭṭhānā-iddhi*), that is, of the success of will, or resolve, as in "being one, he becomes many, and, having become many, he becomes one", etc.
2. As transformation into various shapes (*vikubbanā*), as in disguising oneself as a child, or a snake, etc.
3. Of psychic power (*manomayā*), as in projecting a mentally-created body from one's own physical body.

[175] These supernormal powers are natural by-products of various meditation and concentration practices. Exhibiting or exploiting these powers for one's own benefit is forbidden, and pretending to possess such powers is grounds for expulsion from the monastic community.

[176] *Ijjhati* "to prosper" and *sijjhati* "to accomplish" are *iddhi*.

4. Of the power of penetrating knowledge (*ñāṇa-vipphārā*), as in the elimination of mental impurities through insight knowledge.
5. Of concentration (*samādhi-vipphārā*), as in the restraining of hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) through the stages of absorption (*jhāna*).
6. Of the Noble Ones (*ariya*), as in their dwelling on repulsive objects without feeling disgust.
7. Of the result of *kamma* (*kamma-vipākajā*), or the distinction of nature, as in the power of celestial beings to travel through the air, or birds to fly in the sky.
8. Of the person who possesses special merits (*puñña*), as the ability to traverse the sky possessed by universal monarchs (*cakka-vatti*).
9. Of magical arts (*vijjāmayā*), as in being able to travel through the sky through the power of spells (*vijjā*) or medicine.
10. Of right application (*sammā-payogā*), as in the banishment of sensual desire through renunciation (in the religious life) and the enjoyment of prosperity through right effort in worldly activities.

Of these, the first three (*adhiṭṭhānā*, *vikubbanā*, *manomayā*) are to be taken in connection with *abhiññā-iddhi*. The following is the method of performing the eight kinds of supernormal powers (*iddhi*) given in the formula cited above.

Disciples, who are beginners and who wish to acquire these supernormal powers, must attain the eight absorptions (*jhāna*) through each of the first eight *kasiṇas* and train the mind in fourteen ways:

1. In the direct order of the *kasiṇas*:

   "First, one attains to jhāna in the earth-kasiṇa, then in the water-kasiṇa, and so on in the eight kasiṇas in due order. [In this manner,] one attains to jhāna a hundred times, nay, a thousand times."

2. In the reverse order of the *kasiṇas*:

   "Starting from the white-kasiṇa, one attains to jhāna in the eight kasiṇas in reverse order."

3. In both the direct order and the reverse order of the *kasiṇas*:

   "One attains to jhāna repeatedly from the earth-kasiṇa up to the white-kasiṇa, and from the white-kasiṇa back to the earth-kasiṇa."

4. In the direct order of the *jhānas*:

   "One repeats the attainment from the first jhāna up to the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception."

5. In the reverse order of the *jhānas*:

   "One repeats the attainment of jhāna from the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception back to the first jhāna."

6. In the direct order and the reverse order of the *jhānas*:

   "One repeats the attainment from the first jhāna up to neither perception nor non-perception, and from there back to the first jhāna."

7. In skipping over the *jhānas*:

   "One enters into the first jhāna in the earth-kasiṇa, the third jhāna in the same, then, removing it [from the mind], one enters into the sphere of infinite space, then, the sphere of nothingness. Thus, omitting every second jhāna [but not the kasiṇa], one trains one's mind."

8. In skipping over the *kasiṇas*:

   "Having entered into the first jhāna in the earth-kasiṇa, one again enters into it in the fire-kasiṇa, then, in the blue-kasiṇa, then, in the red-kasiṇa. Thus, omitting every second kasiṇa [but not the jhāna], one trains one's mind."

9. In skipping over the *jhānas* and the *kasiṇas*:

   "Having entered into the first jhāna in the earth-kasiṇa, one enters into the third [jhāna] in the fire-kasiṇa. Leaving the blue-kasiṇa, one enters into the sphere of infinite space, and, then, into the sphere of nothingness from the red-kasiṇa. Thus, by alternate omission of jhāna and kasiṇa, one trains one's mind."

10. In shifting the *jhāna* factors:

    "Having entered into the first jhāna in the earth-kasiṇa, one enters into the other jhānas in the same kasiṇa. This is [called] 'shifting the jhāna factors'."

11. In shifting the *kasiṇa* object:

    "Having entered into the first jhāna in the earth-kasiṇa, one enters into the same in the water-kasiṇa, and so in the others up to the white-kasiṇa. This entering into one jhāna in all kasiṇas is [called] 'shifting the object'."

12. In shifting the *jhāna* factor and the *kasiṇa* object:

> *"Having entered into the first jhāna in the earth-kasiṇa, one enters into the second jhāna in the water-kasiṇa, the third in the fire-kasiṇa, the fourth in the air-kasiṇa. From the blue-kasiṇa, one enters into the sphere of infinite space, into infinite consciousness from the yellow-kasiṇa, into the sphere of nothingness from the red-kasiṇa, into the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception from the white-kasiṇa. This is [called] 'shifting the factor and object'."*

13. In determining the factors:

> *"The first jhāna has five factors (jhānanga), the second has three, the third has two, the fourth has two, the sphere of infinite space has one, and the same with the other three [immaterial] spheres. Thus, one determines the jhāna factors."*

14. In determining the object:

> *"'This jhāna has the earth-kasiṇa for its object, this has the water-kasiṇa …' Thus, one determines the object of jhāna."*

Thus, disciples train their mind in these fourteen ways to be skilled in the psychic powers, for it is not possible for disciples who have not subdued their mind by these methods to exercise psychic powers. But, great beings such as the *Buddha*, *Pacceka Buddhas*, and the Great Disciples, who have strong willpower and virtue cultivated by their application to meditation in the past, become skilled in the psychic and other supernormal powers with the attainment of Arahatship, without recourse to the preliminary training explained in these fourteen methods. Psychic powers, being the control of elements through mental force, necessitate the acquisition of such powers as will, thought, energy, and wisdom, which are said to be its basic principles (*iddhi-pāda*). The training of the mind in the methods just described is, therefore, indispensable for beginners, if they are to reinforce and sharpen these four basic principles so that they may develop their psychic faculties.

Disciples who are successful in the preliminary exercises and who enter into and progress through the four absorptions (*jhāna*) in a systematic manner under the control of will, thought, energy, and wisdom are able to attain various kinds of psychic powers, for:

> *"With one's mind thus concentrated, purified and cleansed, without blemishes, with defilements gone, ready to act, firm and established, one applies and directs one's mind to the method of supernormal accomplishment (iddhi-vidhā)."*

Furthermore (*Anguttara Nikāya* I, 9):

> *"Monks, I do not see any other state which, being cultivated and developed, becomes so pliant and wieldy as the mind."*

For the mind, when concentrated and purified through the fourth *jhāna*, is pliant and wieldy like well-purified gold. When the mind is thus trained and purified, it becomes firm and well established in sixteen ways that are said to be roots from which spring the development of psychic power. The sixteen ways are described as follows (*Paṭisambhidāmagga* II, 206):

1. The inflexible mind does not waver in idleness, so it is imperturbable;
2. The unrelated mind does not waver in distraction;
3. The unbending mind does not waver in lust;
4. The unoffending mind does not waver in malice;
5. The independent mind does not waver in opinion;
6. The unfettered mind does not waver in lustful desires;
7. The emancipated mind does not waver in sensuous lust;
8. The detached mind does not waver in passion;
9. The unconfined mind does not waver in confinement of passion;
10. The one-pointed mind does not waver in manifold passion;
11. The mind upheld by confidence does not waver in absence of confidence;
12. The mind upheld by energy does not waver in idleness;
13. The mind upheld by mindfulness does not waver in negligence;
14. The mind upheld by concentration does not waver in distraction;
15. The mind with knowledge does not waver in ignorance;
16. The illuminated mind does not waver in the darkness of ignorance, so it is imperturbable.

The following is the commentarial exposition of the *iddhi* formula cited in the scriptures immediately after the attainment of concentration occurs:

1. *"Being one, he becomes many, and, having become many, he becomes one."*

   Having accomplished the four absorptions (*jhāna*), which are the foundation of psychic powers (*iddhi*), and having developed the four bases of *iddhi* (as explained in connection with the requisites of enlightenment [*bodhipakkhiya*] [see Chapter 11]), disciples who wish to appear in many forms for the purpose of hearing the *Dhamma* in distant places personally or for communicating with others should enter into the fourth *jhāna* with that idea in view. Rising therefrom, saying, if such be their wish, "May I be a hundred; may I be a hundred," they should enter again into the *jhāna*. Rising therefrom, they become resolute. Through the power of their resolve, they become a hundred. The same with a thousand or a hundred thousand, and so on. In other words (*Paṭisambhidāmagga* II, 207): "Being one by nature, he contemplates many forms. Contemplating many forms, he becomes many, like Venerable Culla Panthaka." Herein, Venerable Panthaka has been cited as a personal testimony to the ability to manifest many forms.

Venerable Culla Panthaka is said to have attained Arahatship by meditating upon a piece of cloth given to him by the *Buddha* as an object for contemplation. As he kept handling the cloth, it became soiled. Then, he thought: "This piece of cloth was clean and pure, but it has become dirty because of my body." This aroused the knowledge in him to discern the nature of the body, so that, through increasing insight into the five aggregates (*khandha*), he approached near to adaptation knowledge (*anuloma-ñāṇa*). At that moment, the *Buddha* whispered to him these illuminating verses (*Dhammapada* Commentary, 264):

"Defilements are dirt, not that which is soiled;
For defilements, indeed, dirt is the name.
The wise, expelling this dirt,
Live in the teaching of Him who is freed from dirt.

"Wrath is dirt, not that which is soiled;
For wrath, indeed, dirt is the name.
The wise, expelling this dirt,
Live in the teaching of Him who is freed from dirt.

"Delusion is dirt, not that which is soiled;
For delusion, indeed, dirt is the name.
The wise, expelling this dirt,
Live in the teaching of Him who is freed from dirt.

At the conclusion of these verses, Venerable Culla Panthaka attained the nine transcendental states together with the four analytical knowledges (*paṭisambhidā*) and the branches of higher knowledge.

On the next day, he filled the monastery with a thousand replicates of himself, all created by his psychic power.

Here, the forms that were created resembled the creator because they were created without any attempt at distinction in position or posture. But, if disciples wish to create various forms appearing to be of various ages, in various positions, or doing various actions, they should rise from the basic *jhāna* with the determination: "Let so many forms be of the first part of age, and so on." Again entering into *jhāna*, they rise and, with the resolute thought, the forms appear as the disciples desire.

When, having become many, disciples wish to become one, they should enter into the *jhāna* with that resolution, and, rising therefrom, they should resolve to be one. With that resolute thought, they return to their own form. This is the case if they wish to be one before the lapse of a certain time. Otherwise, they will become one again automatically after the lapse of the specified time.

2. *"He appears and disappears at will."*

When disciples wish to render themselves or others visible at a distant place, or to make a hidden thing visible, they produce visibility, dispel darkness, reveal what is hidden, and bring into sight what is out of sight. Rising from the basic *jhāna*, they determine: "May this dark place be lighted up", "May this hidden place be revealed", or "May this be visible". With this thought, they enter into the *jhāna*, and, rising therefrom, they make the appropriate resolution. With that resolve, they bring to pass what they wish. If they so wish, disciples who are at a distance can see others, and the others can see the disciples. The *Buddha* Himself is said to have performed this feat (*iddhi*) when He was invited to Sāketa, separated at a distance of seven leagues from Sāvatthī. The *Buddha* decided that the citizens of Sāketa should see the citizens of Sāvatthī and that the citizens of Sāvatthī should see those of Sāketa. He also made the earth split in two as far down as Avīci and space divided into two as far up as the *brahma*-world, so that the people saw the world from Avīci up to the *brahma*-world. This feat, known as "the opening of the world", is also illustrated in the *Buddha's* knowledge of the "Twin Miracle"[177] (*Paṭisambhidāmagga* I, 125).

The Elder Dhammadinna of Talangara Monastery in Tambapaṇṇidīpa (Śri Lanka), opened the world when he was reciting the Apaṇṇaka Sutta (*Aguttara Nikāya* I, 113) at the Tissa Mahāvihāra Monastery (*Mahāvaṁsa* ["Great Chronicle"] 20, 25). The audience saw downward as far as the Avīci hell-realm and upwards as far as the *brahma*-world (*Visuddhimagga* 392). Such is the feat of visibility.

Those who wish to perform the feat of invisibility turn light into darkness, make what is open hidden, what is visible invisible, what is within sight out of sight. Thus, they make themselves and others invisible to sight. The *Buddha* performed this feat by making Yasa invisible to his father, although he was seated nearby (*Vinaya* I, 16). The same power was displayed by Mahinda the Great on the day of his arrival in Śri Lanka, when King Tissa did not see others who came with the Monk, though they were seated nearby (*Mahāvaṁsa* ["Great Chronicle"] 6—12).

Moreover, all feats of manifestation are visible, while all feats of concealment are invisible. In the *iddhi* of manifestation, both the psychic power and the possessor are seen as the "Twin Miracle". "Here the Tathāgata performed the 'Twin Miracle', which is beyond the scope of disciples. Fire issued from the upper part of His body, while water issued from the lower part." (*Patīsambhidāmagga* I, 124f.) In the feat (*iddhi*) of invisibility, the psychic power is seen but not the possessor.

3. *"He passes through fences, walls, and mountains unhindered as if through air."*

Wishing to do this, disciples should enter into *jhāna* through the space-*kasiṇa* and, rising therefrom, think of a wall, a rampart, or a mountain. Having made the resolution, "Let there be space", they re-enter into *jhāna*. Emerging therefrom, they see space. If they wish to go up or down or through, there is vacuity. As has been

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[177] Also known as the "Twin Wonder" (*yamaka pāṭihāriya*). It is mentioned and described for the first time in the *Patīsambhidāmagga*. Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), p. 255.

said (*Paṭisambhidāmagga* II, 208): "Naturally, he who has attained the space-*kasiṇa* contemplates the other side of a wall or rampart or hill. Having contemplated, he resolves 'let there be space,' and there is space. Unhindered, he goes from there to the other side of the wall or rampart or hill."

4. *"He dives into the ground and emerges from it as if it were water."*

Wishing to do this, disciples enter into the water-*kasiṇa* and, rising therefrom, mark off as much of the ground as they wish to turn into water. Having done the preliminary exercises, they make the resolution, "Let there be water". With that resolve, the ground, as marked off, becomes water, whereupon, they are able to dive up and down in the ground as though it were water.

As stated in the *Patīsambhidāmagga*:

> *"Naturally, he who has gained jhāna by means of the water-kasiṇa contemplates the ground and, having contemplated, makes the resolution through super-knowledge: 'Let there be water', and there is water. He then dives up and down through the solid ground [as through water]."*

It is said that, not only can disciples create water on the ground, but also butter, oil, honey, molasses, indeed, anything they choose to contemplate, saying, "Let so much of this and so much of that be …" For them only is the ground turned into water. For others, it remains ground. But, should these disciples wish it to be water for others also, then, it becomes water for them. At the end of the specified time, the place marked off returns to solid ground.

5. *"He walks on the water without breaking the surface as if on land."*

Wishing to do this, disciples should enter into the earth-*kasiṇa* and, rising therefrom, mark off so much of the water as is required to turn it into earth. Having completed the preliminary exercises, they should make their resolution in the manner described. With that resolve, the water, in the place marked off, becomes earth, upon which they may walk to and fro.

The *Patīsambhidāmagga* (II, 208) states:

> *"Naturally, he who has gained jhāna by means of the earth-kasiṇa contemplates water and, having contemplated, makes the resolution through super-knowledge: 'Let there be earth', and there is earth. He then walks on the water without breaking through."*

In this way, disciples can create not only earth, but also gems, gold, hills, trees, or whatever they like. For them only does the water become earth. For others, it remains water, in which fish, turtles, and other creatures move about at will. But,

should these disciples wish it to be earth for others also, then, it becomes earth for them. At the end of the specified time, the place marked off returns to water again.

6. *"He flies cross-legged through the sky like a bird with wings."*

Wishing to do this, disciples should enter into the earth-*kasiṇa*, and, rising therefrom, if they wish to travel seated, they should mark off a place the size of a seat. After the preliminary exercises, they make their resolution in the aforesaid manner. If they wish to travel lying down, the place marked off should be the size of a cot or a couch. If they wish to go on foot, the place marked off should be the size of a path through a garden or the woods. Thus, they should mark off the place according to their needs and make the resolution: "Let there be earth". With that resolve, it becomes earth, as we are told (*Patīsambhidāmagga* II, 208):

> *"Naturally, he who has gained jhāna by means of the earth-kasiṇa contemplates space and, having contemplated, makes the resolution through super-knowledge: 'Let there be earth', and there is earth. In space, in the sky, he walks to and fro, stands, sits, and lies down."*

Here, disciples who travel through the sky must possess divine sight (*dibba-cakkhu*) in order to see hills, trees, buildings, etc. on their way and also to descend in a suitable place.

7. *"He even touches and strokes with his hand the sun and the moon, mighty and powerful as they are."*

This feat is produced by the psychic power of basic *jhāna* of super-knowledge (*Patīsambhidāmagga* II, 208):

> *"Here, he who has controlled his mind and has attained psychic powers contemplates the sun and the moon and, having contemplated, makes the resolution through super-knowledge: "Let them come to the side of my hand", and they so appear. Seated or lying down, he handles, feels, and touches, the sun and the moon with his hand."*

If disciples wish to go to the sun and the moon, they can do so. But, if they wish to touch them here on earth, they make the resolution: "Let them come to my hand", and, by virtue of their resolve, they come. They touch them by creating a psychic body dependent upon their natural body and allowing it to become enlarged. Just as one disciple does this, so does another. When many hundreds and thousands of them do this, each one of them can succeed. But, the movement and the lighting of the natural sun and moon are not changed. Just as when a thousand vessels are filled with water and, in each vessel, the reflection of the moon is seen but the movement

and the lighting of the moon are the same, just so should this feat be regarded. The Commentary on the Mahāsakuludāyi Sutta (The Greater Discourse to Sakuludāyin) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 77) relates a story of a lay follower (*Upāsaka*) in Śri Lanka who had experienced this psychic power and afterwards lost it.

8. *"He travels in the body as far as the brahma-world."*

This is explained in the following text (*Patīsambhidāmagga* II, 209):

> *"If he, who is possessed of psychic power and has controlled his will, wishes to go to the brahma-world, he resolves that the distance be near, and it becomes near. He resolves that the near be distant, and it becomes distant. He resolves that the many be few, and they become few. He resolves that the few be many, and they become many. With divine sight, he sees Brahmā's form. With divine hearing, he hears Brahmā's voice. With the knowledge of the mind of others, he knows the mind of Brahmā. If he wishes to go to the brahma-world in this visible body, he applies his jhāna mind to the physical body, he makes a resolution concerning the mind as the body, having applied the mind to the body, he enters into the thought of ease and lightness, and, in his visible body, he goes to the brahma-world. If he ... wishes to go to the brahma-world in an invisible body, he makes a resolution concerning the body as the mind ... he enters into the thought of ease and lightness and, in an invisible body, goes to the brahma-world. In the presence of Brahmā, he creates a mind-formed body ... He walks to and fro, and the created body walks to and fro. If he stands ... sits ... lies down, the created body also stands ... sits ... lies down. If he emits vapor ... flames ... speaks ... whatever he does, so does the created body."*

This text contains a description of many forms of psychic powers (*iddhi*) which are conducive to physical control that may be exercised as far as the *brahma*-world. Instances of the power to make the distant near are given in the record of the *Buddha's* "Twin Miracle", for the *Buddha*, at the conclusion of the performance of the "Twin Miracle", went to the *deva*-world in three steps. Mahā Moggallāna is alleged to have reduced the distance of thirty leagues to the town of Sankassa, thus making it easy for the people of Sāvatthī to reach Sankassa instantly on the occasion of the *Buddha's* descent from the *deva*-world.

In a time of famine, the Elder Cūḷa Samudda in Tambaṇṇi is said to have taken seven hundred Monks for alms to Pāṭaliputta (modern-day Patna, India) early in the day, crossing the ocean as easily as if it were a small ditch. The Elder Tissagutta is reputed to have acted similarly when, having bathed in the evening, he thought of saluting the *bodhi*-tree and drew it near.

In the story about subduing the mass-murderer Angulimāla (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 86), the *Buddha* turned a short distance into a long one so that Angulimāla could not catch up with Him. In the story of the rich miser Illīsa, also known as Macchariya

Kosiya (*Jātaka* 78), the Elder Mahā Moggallāna made a small quantity (a bowlful of cakes) into a large quantity (enough to feed five hundred Monks) (*Dhammapada* Commentary I, 367). With this psychic power, one cannot only increase quantity but also change quality, such as making something that is sweet into something that is not sweet, or a thing that is not sweet into something that is sweet. For instance, the Elder Mahā Anula saw a number of Monks who, in collecting alms, were only able to obtain some dry food and had seated themselves down on a riverbank to eat it. Thereupon, the Elder Mahā Anula resolved that the water of the river should be turned into cream and gave a signal to the Novices (*sāmaṇera*), who took it in cups and gave it to the assembled Monks.

In going to the *brahma*-world or any other place, disciples, rising from the basic *jhāna*, direct their mind to follow the physical body, which is slow in motion. Then, they descend into the feeling of ease and lightness, or buoyancy, of their body, originated from the visualization of the *jhāna* object, that is, the object of the *iddhi* mind, which is free from hindrances and full of happiness or calm and serenity. The physical body, being affected by this mental serenity, becomes as buoyant, or light, as a cotton ball, and so disciples go to the *brahma*-world or any other celestial realm in a visible body, as light as a cotton ball.

If disciples wish to go on foot, they create a path in the sky by means of the earth-*kasiṇa*. If they wish to fly, they create a current of air by means of the air-*kasiṇa*. Here, the will to go is the main thing. By the power of will produced by psychic power (*iddhi*), they go forth visibly, like an arrow shot by an archer.

In going with an invisible body, they make the body follow the mind, which possesses great speed, and they descend into the thought of ease and buoyancy which is co-existent with the consciousness that has the physical body as object. The rest is the same as stated above.

What has been stated so far forms the preliminary exercise of reaching the *brahma*-world, and disciples have not yet gained control of Brahmā by means of their own body. When they create a mind-made body in the presence of Brahmā, they are then said to have gained control of Brahmā by means of their body.

These are the psychic powers (*iddhi*) that are to be exercised through the power of will.

In the psychic power of transformation, disciples make the resolution to appear in different forms, while disguising their natural form, as is described (*Patīsambhidāmagga* II, 210): "Leaving his natural form, he takes on the form of a boy, of a snake, of a bird, of a *yakkha*, of a *deva*, of a spirit, of a *brahma*, of the ocean, of a hill, of a lion, of a tiger … He creates an elephant, a horse, a soldier, an army."

In so doing, disciples should rise from the basic *jhāna* with one or the other of the *kasiṇa* objects and contemplate themselves as having the form of a boy. Having done this, they should re-enter *jhāna*, and, rising therefrom, make the resolution: "May I be such and such a boy." With resolve, they become so. The same is true of the other forms. Such expressions as, "He creates an elephant", show the possibility of creating

external forms. This being the "showing of various forms" is called the "psychic power of transformation" (*vikubbanā iddhi*).

Desiring to create a mental body from the physical body, that is, to duplicate themselves, disciples rise from the basic *jhāna* and, contemplating the body, make the resolution: "Let the body be a hollow". Then, their body becomes a hollow. They then contemplate another body within themselves and make a resolution in the manner described above. Then, there is another body within their own body. They take it out as they would draw a sword from its scabbard. Hence, the formula (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 77):

> *"Here, a Monk creates a body from this (his) body, having mind-made form, with all limbs and parts, not deprived of senses. Just as if a man were to pull a reed out from its sheath, he would know: 'This is the sheath, this is the reed. The sheath is one thing, the reed is another. It is from the sheath that the reed has been drawn forth'."*

This power, being made by the mind, is called the "psychic power made of mind" (*manomaya iddhi*). It differs from that of transformation only in that the created form is identical with that of its creator.

These are the principal kinds of psychic power explained under the heading of "*iddhi-vidhā*". ■

33

Abhiññā

In the previous chapter, a brief survey was made of the scope of psychic powers (*iddhi*) that may be attained by disciples through the practice of *samādhi* meditation, drawing material from the expositions given in the canonical literature and the Commentaries. In this chapter, certain other powers, known as "*abhiññā*", "higher, or special, knowledge", will be considered. These are usually mentioned in the scriptures immediately after the *iddhi*-formula.

From what has just been said, it will be seen that the possession of *iddhi*, "psychic powers", provides evidence of the mental power of those who, in their religious training, have attained a more spiritually advanced position than that of the ordinary person. Even though possession of these powers may serve as proof of the efficacy of this practice, according to Buddhism, they are of minor significance and of no value in themselves for progress on the path. The possession of psychic powers by those who have attained the path is not only looked upon as inferior (*Dīgha Nikāya* III, 112; *Anguttara Nikāya* I, 93; *Vinaya* II, 183) but also as an impediment which should be rejected if transcendental consciousness is to be attained.

These powers were demonstrated by perfect ones like the *Buddha* and His Great Disciples[178] only on occasions when necessity demanded it in order to bestow happiness and benefit upon others. The *Buddha* performed many such feats at Gayā-sīsa in order to convince the three Kassapa brothers and their followers, who, at first, did not believe Him to be an Enlightened One (*Vinaya* I, 34). The *Buddha* also performed the "Twin Miracle" (*yamaka-pāṭihāriya*) at Sāvatthī in order to refute the arguments of several renowned heretical teachers[179] (*Dhammapada* Commentary 199—230).

In the Kevaddha Sutta (What Brahmā Did Not Know) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 11; I, 213), where six of these powers are explained, these powers are denounced by the *Buddha* Himself in the following words:

> *"It is because I see danger in the practice of these psychic powers that I dislike and abhor them and am ashamed of them."*

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[178] This epithet refers to a small group of extraordinary men and women whom the *Buddha* Himself named as His most outstanding disciples. Among these were such luminaries as Sāriputta, Mahāmoggallāna, Ānanda, and Mahākassapa, to name the most well-known. For more information, cf. Nyanaponika Thera and Hellmuth Hecker, *Great Disciples of the Buddha: Their Lives, Their Works, Their Legacy* (Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications [1997]).

[179] Namely, the famous six philosophers of the time, including Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, the founder of Jainism.

Furthermore, it is a violation of the disciplinary rules (*pātimokkha*) for a Monk to display these superhuman states[180] before lay persons (*Vinaya* II, 112). A false claim to possession of such powers is grounds for expulsion from the *Sangha* (*Vinaya* III, 91).

Psychic powers (*iddhi*), however, being the natural consequence of absorption (*jhāna*) consciousness, induced by certain practices of *samādhi* meditation, are singled out as a special branch, or division, of higher knowledge (*abhiññā*).

There are two lists of *abhiññā* given in the scriptures in different connections: the first, known as "*pañca-abhiññā*", which occurs in the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (II, 216; etc.), refers to the fivefold knowledge connected with *samādhi* meditation: (1) psychic powers (*iddhi-vidhā*); (2) divine hearing (*dibba-sota*); (3) the knowledge of the minds of others (*cetopariya-ñāṇa*, or *paracitta-vijānana*); (4) the power of recollecting former existences (*pubbenivasa-anussati*); and (5) the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of other beings (*cutūpapāta-ñāṇa*), or divine vision (*dibba-cakkhu*). The Commentaries consider these to be mundane (*lokiya*) achievements, which have been attained by *Bodhisattas* and even by non-Buddhist sages (*isi*). They have been recurrent themes in India since time immemorial. But, when attained by those who have not attained the path knowledge, they are looked upon as inferior. For such people, they remain tainted with *āsavas*, and sometimes involve grave danger.

The supreme knowledge attained by disciples is the knowledge of destroying the taints (*āsava*), and this is included as a sixth *abhiññā*, thus forming the second list of "*chaḷabhiññā*", "the sixfold higher knowledge". This list occurs in the *Dīgha Nikāya* (III, 281) as the sixfold knowledge connected with *vipassanā* meditation leading to the Noble Path. The sixth *abhiññā* is superior and, in the Commentaries, is distinguished from the others as "*Arhatta-sādhanā*", "the producing, or manifestation, of Arahatship".

This is termed "*abhiññā*" by the compilers, in accordance with the meaning given in certain discourses (found in *Dīgha Nikāya* I, 77f.; *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 34; II, 17; etc.), where these words occur: *sayaṁ abhiññā, sacchikatvā*, "having fully comprehended and realized [Arahatship] by oneself." All six higher knowledges (*abhiññā*) occur later as positive items of the doctrine that are to be realized (*sacchikābba*). This is found in the *Dīgha Nikāya* (III, 281), while they are explained and discussed in the *Visuddhimagga* (373), *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I, 111—114), and *Milindapañha* (342), as follows:

1. The nature of the first *abhiññā*, *iddhi-vidhā*, has been explained in the previous chapter (Chapter 32). It differs from the other *abhiññās* in its significance and in its field of manifestation. *Iddhi*, "psychic powers", signifies the controlling power both of the subjective and the objective, and it manifests itself as the ability to control both mind and matter. The other four *abhiññās* imply only the internal subjective power of the intellectual faculties, purified and developed by a method of systematic

[180] In brief, these superhuman states cover: (1) the absorptions (*jhāna*); (2) the psychic powers (*iddhi* and *abhiññā*) that can arise from these states; and (3) the transcendental states (*lokuttara dhamma*). Monks are forbidden from discussing or displaying these states, which are beyond the capacity of ordinary men and women, before an unordained person, that is, anyone who is not a Monk or a Nun.

extension. However, the *Visuddhimagga* explains the remaining four *abhiññās*, apart from *iddhi*, in a separate chapter.

2. The second *abhiññā*, known as "*dibba-sota-dhātu*", "the divine ear element", is set forth as follows (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 79):

   "With his mind concentrated ... he applies and directs his mind to the divine ear element. With purified hearing, which far surpasses human hearing, he hears sounds both human and divine, whether far or near."

   According to the *Visuddhimagga*, *dibba-sota-dhātu* implies the hearing sense element of celestial beings (*deva*). It makes the reception of distant sounds possible, because it is produced through good *kamma* and freed from physical impurities such as bile, phlegm, blood, and so on, and from mental impurities such as low passions. The meditator's knowledge of the hearing element, being produced by strengthening and purifying mental exercise, is similar to that of celestial beings. On the basis of this similarity, it is called "*dibba*", "divine". This divine knowledge fulfills the function of the hearing element, hence, it is "*dibba-sota-dhātu*".[181] It transcends the range and scope of normal human hearing and is, therefore, beyond the capacity of ordinary men and women.

   With this pure and extended "divine ear", disciples are able to hear sounds, whether produced on earth or in celestial realms. The extension of the normal limit of hearing is achieved by the following method: Disciples, entering into the basic *jhāna* of higher knowledge and emerging therefrom, should first contemplate gross sounds like a dog barking or thunder, which are distant but within the range of normal hearing. They should then contemplate nearby sounds, ranging gradually from those that are shrill to those that are more refined, as in recitation or conversation conducted in a normal voice, or in the singing of birds, or the sound of a breeze, or of boiling water. They should then attend to the object of sounds from the East, from the West, from the North, from the South, from the Southeast, from the Northwest, from the Northeast, from the Southwest, from below, and from above. As they attain to the object of sounds shrill and refined, the concentrated mind lapses into the *bhavanga* state. Taking any of the sounds previously considered for its object, mind door consciousness arises after the usual vibration in the *bhavanga* stream. When this ceases, there arise in this mental process (*vīthi*) of higher knowledge (*abhiññā*) four or five thought moments, the first four of which are termed "preliminary" (*pari-kamma*), "access" (*upacāra*), "adaptation" (*anuloma*), and "adoption" (*gotrabhū*), respectively. The fourth or fifth thought moment in the same process is termed "*appanā*", "ecstatic consciousness of the material realm belonging to the fourth absorption (*jhāna*)", during and through which the desired phenomenon of sound is brought about. The knowledge that arises together with that ecstatic consciousness,

[181] This may be considered clairaudience, or the paranormal power of hearing.

called "*abhiññā javana*", which is suspended on the object of sound, is to be understood as *dibba-sota-dhātu*, "the divine ear element". Then, this conscious process (*vīthi*) falls into the stream of higher knowledge (*abhiññā*) and is thus strengthened. The same process is obtained in the case of each of the other kinds of higher knowledge, with slight difference regarding the procedure.

Disciples wishing to hear distant sounds should increase this capacity by one inch, two inches, three inches; one mile, two miles, three miles; thus, up to the limit of the world, saying, "I wish to hear the sounds within this space." Thus, disciples who are successful in attaining this knowledge of *dibba-sota* make the fourth *jhāna* consciousness the sound receiving center and are able to hear sounds either on the earth or in the celestial realms, clearly and distinctly. This knowledge is explained in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (I, 112) as "*sota-dhātu-visuddhi-ñāṇa*", the knowledge of purification of the hearing element".

3. The third *abhiññā*, known as "*cetopariya-ñāṇa*" or "*paracitta-vijānana*", "knowledge of the state of the mind of others", is set explained as follows (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 79):

> *"With his mind thus concentrated ... he applies and directs his mind to the knowledge of the state of the mind of others. Discriminating with his mind, he understands the state of the mind of others — of a mind filled with passion, he understands that it is filled with passion; of a mind free from passion, that it is free from passion; of a mind filled with hatred, that it is filled with hatred; of a mind free from hatred, that it is free from hatred; of a mind filled with delusion, that it is filled with delusion; of a mind free from delusion, that it is free from delusion; of a mind that is composed, that it is composed; of a mind that is distracted, that it is distracted; of a mind that is grown great (having attained to the fine material and immaterial absorptions), that it is grown great; of a mind that is not grown great, that it is not grown great; of a mind that is mean, that it is mean; of a mind that is lofty, that it is lofty; of a mind that is concentrated, that it is concentrated; of a mind that is not concentrated, that it is not concentrated; of a mind that is liberated, that it is liberated; of a mind that is not liberated, that it is not liberated. Thus, he knows the state of the mind of others."*

It is apparent from certain phrases in this formula that this *abhiññā* is known as "*cetopariya-ñāṇa*" or "*paracitta-vijānana*", both of which have the same meaning. It implies the knowledge (*ñāṇa*) of the state (*pariya*) of mind (*ceta*). This accords with the meaning found in the above text. Thus, it does not mean the ability to read the thoughts of others, "mental telepathy", but, rather, the state, or disposition, of the mind of others.

According to the interpretation given in the Commentary, this knowledge must necessarily be preceded by *dibba-cakkhu*, "divine vision". Hence, disciples, increasing the light *kasiṇa*, radiating it so as to penetrate into the mind (*hadaya-rūpa*) of another, should search his or her mind. Seeing the states of mind of others through

this faculty, disciples allow their knowledge of the states of mind of others to grow in strength. When it is grown strong, they are able, in due course, to know all states of the mind of others. It is only in the preliminary stage that they should look into the mind of a person to know his or her mental disposition. When the knowledge reaches an advanced stage, disciples are able to know the states of all minds in all three realms of existence (sensory realm [*kāmāvacara*], form realm [*rūpāvacara*], formless realm [*arūpāvacara*]) by passing from mind to mind. Though the text gives only sixteen distinct states of mind, there are many mental dispositions included therein, and those who possess this *abhiññā* know them all. However, it should be noted that an individual of a lower grade cannot possibly know the state of mind of someone of a higher grade; for instance, an average person (*puthujjana*) cannot know the mind of a Stream-Winner (*Sotāpanna*).

Those who possess this knowledge become essentially helpers of others, and they can do more than any psychotherapist, who may only be able to diagnose and offer a temporary "cure". Unfortunately, such treatments do not penetrate to the heart of the problem — greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*). Rather, they are primarily designed to help individuals adjust their behavior in order to conform to the norms of the society in which they live. This *abhiññā* was a special ability of the *Buddha*, which enabled Him to teach the *Dhamma* with success and most beneficial results, because He knew the mental states of His audience. It is one of the ten *Tathāgata* powers, known as "*āsaya-anusaya-ñāṇa*", "the knowledge of the various intentions of individuals" (*Majjhima Nikāya*). In like manner, those who possess this *abhiññā* are able to tailor their help so that it will be most successful and beneficial.

4. The fourth *abhiññā*, known as "*pubbenivāsānussati-ñāṇa*", "the knowledge of manifold former existences", is set forth as follows (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 81):

   "With his mind thus concentrated ... he applies and directs his mind to the knowledge of recollecting previous existences. He recollects various kinds of former lives, such as one birth, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand births, many cycles of evolution of the universe, of its dissolution, and of its evolution and dissolution. 'In that one, I had such a name, clan, caste, was such a dietary, experienced such pleasure and pain, and had such an end of life. Passing away thence, I was reborn in such a place. There, too, I had such a name, clan, caste, was such a dietary, experienced such pleasure and pain, and had such an end of life. Passing away thence, I was reborn here.' Thus, he remembers various kinds of his former lives with their modes and details."

   Herein, according to the Commentary, "previous existence" means the five aggregates (*khandha*) experienced in one's own life-continuum in the past, beginning from the present existence and tracing back. The knowledge (*ñāṇa*) associated with

that mindfulness by which one recollects (*anussarati*) previous existences is called "*pubbenivāsānussati-ñāṇa*", "the knowledge of manifold former existences".

There are six classes of individuals who may possess this knowledge: (1) ascetics holding other views (*titthiya*); (2) ordinary disciples of the *Buddha*; (4) Great Disciples and Chief Disciples of the *Buddha*; (5) *Pacceka Buddhas*; and (6) other *Buddhas*. Of these, because of the weakness of knowledge which is devoid of insight into the classification of mind and matter, the ascetics holding other views (*titthiya*) could remember only forty world-cycles of existences. The ordinary disciples of the *Buddha* can recollect a hundred or a thousand world-cycles, because their knowledge is strong. The eighty Great Disciples were able to recollect a hundred thousand world-cycles. The two Chief Disciples, Sāriputta and Moggallāna, could recollect an immensity (*asankheyya*) and a hundred thousand world-cycles. *Pacceka Buddhas* can recollect two immensities and a hundred thousand world-cycles, for this is the period of their aspirations or exertion for the attainment of Buddhahood. In the case of the *Buddhas*, there is no limit to the power of this knowledge.

Disciples who are beginners and who wish to remember previous existences, should first enter into the four fine material absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*) in due order in solitude and seclusion. Emerging from the fourth *jhāna*, the basis of higher knowledge, they should contemplate their activities, both of the night and the day. They should recollect all that they have done in the morning, afternoon, and evening, in the first watch of the night, in the middle watch, and in the last watch. It is possible for all of their activities to become evident to the natural consciousness, and all the more so to the concentrated mind. They should contemplate all of their actions, tracing them back from the present, on the second day, the third, the fourth, the fifth, the tenth day, half a month, a full month, as far back as a year. Recollecting in this manner what they have done for the past ten years, twenty years, as far back as their birth in the present existence, they should contemplate the state of their present existence and body (*nāma-rūpa*) at the moment of their death in the life immediately preceding the present one.

In this great expansion of memory, disciples of quick intuition are able, at the very first attempt, to separate the birth moment of their consciousness in this life and to consider the object of consciousness that arose at the moment of their last death. But, if beginners are of sluggish intuition, it is extremely difficult to comprehend this particular junction at the end of the preceding existence and the beginning of the present one. Nevertheless, they should not abandon the attempt, but should enter again and again into the basic *jhāna* and should contemplate that junction of birth, and, thus, they may be able to comprehend the death moment in the previous birth.

Herein, the knowledge that arises, recollecting everything, starting back from their last act of sitting to the moment of their birth, is not the knowledge of previous existences (*pubbe-nivāsa*). But, when disciples contemplate the last object of mind and body connected with the moment of their previous death, there arise in them four or five rapid impulse moments (*abhiññā-javana*), of which the last one, belonging to the fourth *jhāna*, is called ecstatic (*appanā*) consciousness. The knowledge that

arises together with this consciousness is called the "knowledge of one's previous existence". By means of mindfulness associated with it, disciples recollect their various previous existences. Hence the formula (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 81):

"With his mind thus concentrated ... he applies and directs his mind to the knowledge of recollecting previous existences. He recollects various kinds of former lives, such as one birth, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand births, many cycles of evolution of the universe, of dissolution, and of evolution and dissolution. 'In that one, I had such a name, clan, caste, was such a dietary, experienced such pleasure and pain, and had such an end of life. Passing away thence, I was reborn in such a place. There, too, I had such a name, clan, caste, was such a dietary, experienced such pleasure and pain, and had such an end of life. Passing away thence, I was reborn here.' Thus, he remembers various kinds of his former lives with their modes and details."

This insight obtained by extending the recollection of the past history of life in previous existences, and also the knowledge of the past history of other beings obtained thereby, is a salient feature of Buddhism. It is illustrated by the *jātaka* tales as well as by the life stories of Buddhist saints. In some cases, this knowledge may be arrived at without passing through the *jhānas* by the practice of tracing events backwards. In later works, this is called "*jāti-smaraṇa-jñāna*", "the knowledge of remembering the previous birth", as is sometimes encountered in several individuals, generally in children,[182] but it is very weak and generally fades rather quickly.

The knowledge of manifold former existences (*pubbenivāsānussati-ñāṇa*) gained by meditation is of practical benefit in many ways. With this knowledge, disciples realize the truth of rebirth, the operation of the law of *kamma*, and the history of the evolution and dissolution of the universe and the rounds of rebirth (*saṁsāra*). It is of great assistance in cultivating universal loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*). It enables disciples to gain insight into the nature of phenomenal existence and to realize the Four Noble Truths. Through this knowledge, the real nature of mental and physical phenomena becomes more and more apparent, and disciples gain insight into the reality of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*). The *jātaka* stories recounted by the *Buddha* are based upon His knowledge of former existences.

5. The fifth *abhiññā* knowledge, known as "*cutūpapāta-ñāṇa*", the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings", or "*dibba-cakkhu-ñāṇa*", "divine vision", is set forth as follows (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 82):

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[182] This is still found in Buddhist countries in Asia, more among Tibetans than elsewhere. Many modern-day Tibetan adepts claim to possess this and other supernormal powers, and several celebrated instances have been recorded.

"With his mind thus concentrated ... he applies and directs his thoughts to the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings. With his divine vision, purified and surpassing human sight, he sees beings passing away and being reborn again, low or high, of good or bad appearance, in happy or miserable existences, according to their kamma. He fully realizes that those beings who are given to evil conduct in word, deed, and thought, who revile the noble ones, who embrace false views, who acquire the kamma resulting from their false views, at the dissolution of the body after death are reborn in a state of woe. But those who are given to good conduct in word, deed, and thought, who do not revile the noble ones, who embrace right views, who acquire the kamma resulting from their right views, at the dissolution of their body after death are reborn in a happy state."

Herein, successful disciples (*kata-abhinīhāra*) possess the psychic vision, or the eye of knowledge, resembling the vision of celestial beings (*deva*), which is the result of good *kamma*, and are able to discern distant objects through its purity. Because of its resemblance to the vision of celestial beings, this knowledge is called "*dibba-cakkhu-ñāṇa*", "divine vision", after the opening words "*dibbena cakkhunā*", "with divine vision or eye" given in the above formula. In accordance with its function, as explained in the formula, it is named "*cutūpapāta-ñāṇa*",[183] the knowledge (*ñāṇa*) of the passing away (*cuti*) and rebirth (*upapāta*) of beings"

The knowledge is pure in the sense that it comprises "purity of views (*diṭṭhi-visuddhi*)", because it discerns both the fall and rise of beings. Those who see only the fall, not the rise, hold the view of annihilation (*uccheda*). Those who see only the rise, not the fall, hold the view of the appearance of new beings (*nava-satta-pātubhāva-diṭṭhi*) as a new creation. Inasmuch as the double discernment goes beyond these two wrong views, it produces purity of views. Because it surpasses the sight, or vision, of ordinary humans, it is superhuman.

Disciples who are beginners and who wish to acquire this divine vision should induce absorption (*jhāna*) by means of the light *kasiṇa* and should make this the basis of higher knowledge. Then, they should contemplate any of the three *kasiṇa* objects, fire, white, or light, up to the point at which psychic illumination occurs. That is, they should develop up to access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) and stop there, for if they attain to rapture (*pīti*) in them, the *kasiṇa* object will entirely occupy their mind, taking it away from the external object of the beings they wish to discern. Of these three *kasiṇas*, the light *kasiṇa* is the best, for divine vision is actually produced by the development of the perception of light (*āloka-saññā*), as thus stated (*Anguttara Nikāya* II, 45):

"He attains to the perception of light, determines daylight, considers light at night as seen in day, considers light in day as seen at night. Thus, with unobstructed, wide-open thought, he develops the radiant mind."

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[183] This is explained in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* under the heading of "*dibba-cakkhu-ñāṇa*".

> This statement is made with reference to the fourth absorption (*jhāna*) in the light *kasiṇa*. Two others, the fire and white *kasiṇas*, are mentioned as possible substitutes for the light *kasiṇa*. Disciples, therefore, as a preliminary preparation, enter into the fourth *jhāna* in any of these three *kasiṇas*, and, emerging therefrom, they again increase the light to the limit of access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) in order to see external objects. As far as they extend this illumination, they should see the objects within it. If they attempt to see beyond that limit, the duration of the *kasiṇa* light ceases, and the light disappears. Then, they should enter again and again into the basic *jhāna* and, emerging from it, should diffuse light. In this way, it becomes strong and steady. It remains within the zone which they select, saying "Let there be light", and they may sit and see the objects the whole day.
>
> This vision, however, may prove a danger for those who are not on the Noble Path, because, through the light they create, they may see dreadful objects and be overcome by fear. Such persons should not undertake these exercises.

The *Visuddhimagga* states that this knowledge of divine vision (*dibba-cakkhu-ñāṇa*) contains two others, namely, the knowledge of future existence (*anāgataṁsa-ñāṇa*) and the knowledge of the destiny of beings according to their *kamma* (*yathā-kammupaga-ñāṇa*). Of these, the latter is set forth in the formulas in the words "*yathā-kammupage satte passati*", "one sees beings passing according to their *kamma*". With the knowledge of future existence, one's particular destiny or state of rebirth in the future can be discerned. This precognitive power is a special ability of the *Buddha*, for He is able to see future events in detail. Through the knowledge of the destiny of beings according to their *kamma*, particular events in the past history of an individual can be discerned. These two knowledges are produced by divine vision, and they are, therefore, included in *dibba-cakkhu*, "divine vision". The inclusion of these two knowledges makes seven *abhiññās* that are attainable as the supernormal advantages of *samādhi* meditation.

In this extension, the last *abhiññā*, the knowledge of destroying the taints (*āsava*), becomes the eighth, and this is the advantage that can only be attained by the development of full knowledge through *vipassanā* meditation.

This knowledge, being developed through the process of *vipassanā*, induces the four Noble Paths (*Sotāpatti*, *Sakadāgāmi*, *Anāgāmi*, *Arahat*) and their fruits (*phala*), and it culminates in the two-fold emancipation: (1) emancipation through *samādhi* (*ceto-vimutti*) and (2) emancipation through full knowledge (*paññā-vimutti*). This is the end of the long course of practice, and the disciples have hereby attained their ultimate goal, the eternal bliss of *nibbāna*. ■

34

Samāpatti

Successful disciples of meditation (*bhāvanā*) who have attained the full benefit of their practice naturally experience the happiness (*sukha*) of their achievement in their current lifetime. Those who have attained one stage of sainthood pause to enjoy the fruit (*phala*) of that stage before they try to attain the next higher stage. This spiritual enjoyment is called "*samāpatti sukha*", literally, "the happiness of attainment". *Samāpatti*, as a technical term used in the doctrine of meditation, is applied to the enjoyment of spiritual quiescence for an indefinite period of time. There are two series of attainments: (1) the eight attainments and (2) the nine attainments. The eight attainments (as they are given in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* I, 20) consist of the four form, or fine material, absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*) and the four formless, or immaterial, absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*), the latter four of which, in particular, are termed "*samāpatti*", "attainments".

The nine attainments include the eight just mentioned together with the further stage of the complete cessation of perception and sensation (*saññā-vedayita-nirodha*), as found in the *Dīgha Nikāya* (II, 111 and 156) and the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (II, 216, 222, etc.). The first four are described (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 40f.) as "*diṭṭha-dhamma-sukha-vihāra*", "the happy abodes in the present life", and the remainder as "*santa-vihāra*", "the tranquil abodes".

The eight attainments are advantages resulting from *samādhi* meditation, while the ninth, *saññā-vedayita-nirodha*, "the complete cessation of perception and sensation", is secured through *vipassanā* meditation. In the formulas, these attainments are called "*nava-anupubba-vihāra*", "the nine gradual, or successive, abodes" (*Dīgha Nikāya* II, 156; III, 265; *Anguttara Nikāya* IV, 144 and 448). Due to the mental state they induce, these attainments are termed "*abhisaññā-nirodha*", "the cessation of higher perception" (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 180).

When considered in respect to the state of attainment, the attainments (*samāpatti*) are of two grades: (1) the mundane (*lokiya*) and (2) the supramundane (*lokuttara*). When the eight absorptions (*jhāna*) are attained by disciples who have not attained to the path, they are mundane attainments and are termed in the Commentaries "*jhāna-samāpatti*", "absorption attainments". When the same eight absorptions are associated with the fruit of the path, they are termed "*phala-samāpatti*", "attainment of the fruit", and are supramundane attainments, that is, the attainments of the Noble Ones (*ariya-puggala*). The *nirodha-samāpatti*, "the attainment of cessation", can only be achieved by those who have reached the stages of Non-Returner (*Anāgāmi*) and *Arahat*. This attainment is

neither mundane nor supramundane, neither conditioned nor unconditioned, because it is completely unconscious and, therefore, cannot be defined.

Jhāna Samāpatti

In the *jhāna samāpatti*, the attainment takes place on four occasions: (1) at the time of preparation for the next higher *jhāna*; (2) at the time of experiencing psychic powers (*iddhi*) and higher knowledge (*abhiññā*); (3) at the time of enjoying the happiness of *jhāna*; and (4) at the time of death (*parinibbāna*).

Those who wish to enter into *jhāna* and remain in it as a happy abode, should first cultivate the skill of predetermining the duration of the *jhāna* session that is to be entered into (*adhiṭṭhāna-vasitā*), the skill of prolonging *jhāna* at will while under its influence (*samāpajjana-vasitā*), and the skill of rousing themselves punctually on the termination of the predetermined period (*vuṭṭhāna-vasitā*). The mental process of this attainment is the same as that of attaining *jhāna* discussed elsewhere in this book. The only distinction is that the number of mind moments (*cittakkhaṇa*) of *jhāna* induced at will is unlimited, because the length of its duration is dependent upon the progress made in the previous exercises. The following table shows the state of mind when it remains in the first *jhāna* attainment:

Table 1: Entering into the First Jhāna

Kamma	Preliminary			*Kamma*
BH	VI CP MD PR AN CL	Jhāna Jhāna Jhāna Jhāna	Rising	BH BH BH
aep	aep aep aep aep aep aep	aep aep aep aep aep aep aep aep	…	aep aep aep

Key: BH = *Bhavanga*
VI = Its vibration
CP = Change of process
MD = Mind door cognition
PR = Preliminary (*parikamma*) moment
AN = Adaptation (*anuloma*) moment
CL = Change of lineage (*gotrabhū*) moment

a = The arising moment
e = The existing moment
p = The passing moment

The table represents the process of the attainment of *jhāna* (*jhāna-samāpatti-vīthi*). Here, "*jhāna*" means the after-image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) generated by means of the *kasiṇa* object, whereby the consciousness is absorbed into *jhāna* ecstasy. The dotted line indicates the continuity of *samāpatti* during the period previously determined. "Rising" indicates the emergence that naturally passes through *bhavanga* before the mind returns to the normal state. The rest is to be understood as explained in the Appendix to Chapter 23. With the other three absorptions (*jhāna*), the process is the same. The only difference is that, in each *jhāna*, the intensity of rapture (ecstasy, zest) (*pīti*) is rather greater than in the previous one, that is to say that it is gradually increased at each stage.

In the first *jhāna samāpatti*, all physical impulses are stilled, and all responses to sensory stimuli cease except to those of sound. Since reasoning (initial application) (*vitakka*) and investigation (sustained application) (*vicāra*) are still present in this *jhāna*, the *samāpatti* may be disturbed by sounds, as in the case of a dream. Sound, therefore, is a "thorn" (*saddo kaṇṭhako*), or irritant, of this *samāpatti*, and disciples who wish to attain it should choose a place of solitude and seclusion, as did the Elder of Gosingavana, who retired to the forest because he found even his monastery too noisy (*Anguttara Nikāya* V, 133). In the attainment of *samāpatti*, the body is entirely controlled by the *jhāna* and is maintained in the same posture, standing, sitting, or lying down, for an indefinite period, fresh and at ease, without stiffness or fatigue. Thus, it remains in the same position in which the *samāpatti* is attained until the end of the period predetermined by the disciple. The bliss of this attainment is perfect rest and peace unimpaired by sensory emotions, and it is a supreme and excellent abode, free from the turmoil of passions. It is, however, not yet free from the shadows of reflection concerning the senses.

In the second *jhāna samāpatti*, the first two absorption factors (*jhānanga*), initial application (reasoning) (*vitakka*) and sustained application (investigation) (*vicāra*), that is, the recognition of sensory stimuli, cease to exist, together with the source of sound, and disciples are, therefore, no longer disturbed by sound (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* II, 273). This is called "*ariyo-tuṇhībhāvo*", "noble silence", the attitude adopted by the Noble Ones when they are not discussing or listening to the *Dhamma*. Cognizance of the mental object gives rise to perception and attention, and, when that ceases, the inward silence is complete. Thereupon, disciples will not be disturbed even by the feeling and perception of mental objects, such as rapture (*pīti*) and happiness (*sukha*), which are factors of the second *jhāna*.

The third *jhāna samāpatti*, being free from excitement of mind caused by *pīti*, is more intense and subtle, and disciples in this attainment are said to be truly "the happy one" (*sukha-vihāri*), for their mindfulness is so alert and pure that it does not allow the balance of happy calm to be disturbed by the excitement of spiritual rapture associated therewith. But, it is not free from the reflective shadows cast by rapture, and, therefore, its intensity is not perfect.

In the fourth *jhāna samāpatti*, the feeling of pleasure is neutralized, and mental tranquility is well established by one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*) associated with equanimity (*upekkhā*). Here, the heart ceases to function, and both breathing in and breathing out are arrested (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* IV, 217). As long as disciples remain in the *jhāna* state, life is supported entirely by the element of heat that is dependent upon the power of *kamma*. Consciousness which is free from the lower factors of *jhāna* is based upon the object pertaining to the mental nature of that *kasiṇa* element, wherein the *jhāna* is attained. This fourth *jhāna samāpatti* is the highest stage of tranquility that can be achieved by the consciousness associated with material objects. But, inasmuch as it is dependent upon matter and belongs to the material world, it is not the highest attainment, for there are other attainments where the mind can remain independent of material impressions in a more tranquil state of quiescence. These are the four formless attainments, which are called "*santa-vihāra*", "the tranquil abodes".

The Attainment of Infinite Space

At this point, disciples who wish to attain the state of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*) should emerge from the fourth *jhāna* induced by any *kasiṇa*, except that of limited space (*paricchinnākāsa-kasiṇa*), and determine to pass beyond material objects, or, in other words (*Anguttara Nikāya* IV, 400), "He practices with a view to disgust, detachment, and cessation of material things." In the fourth absorption concentration (*jhāna samādhi*), disciples have transcended all concern about corporeality, including their own body, and have controlled even the life forces of breathing. But, there remains in their mind the *kasiṇa* object pertaining to material form. In the earth *kasiṇa*, for instance, the mind is suspended on its abstract image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) as the objective support. Disciples, considering the tranquility associated with it to be gross, and that of infinite space to be calm, determine to remove the *kasiṇa* object from their mind. In so doing, they extend the *kasiṇa* object to the end of the world systems, or as far as they desire. Then, they turn their attention to the space touched by the extended *kasiṇa* as "space, space, infinite space" and allow the *kasiṇa* object to slip from their mind. When the *kasiṇa* device is removed from their mind, they substitute the space touched by it as the mental object. This means that they reflect not on the *kasiṇa* device, which was, as it were, floating in the space equal to its extended form, but only on the space.

When they develop the reflection on "space, space", there appears the sign of the space from which the *kasiṇa* device has been removed, and this becomes the immaterial object of their mind. Meditation upon this sign of space leads them to the ecstasy within the consciousness which is called the "sphere of infinite space" (*ākāsānañcāyatana*). Entering into and remaining in this ecstasy of infinite space is termed "*ākāsānañcāyatana-samāpatti*", "the attainment of the sphere of infinite space", to which the following refers (*Dīgha Nikāya* II, 112; *Majjhima Nikāya* I, 174):

> *"Again, by passing entirely beyond all perceptions of form, by eliminating the perception of sensory impact, by not attending to perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', he enters into and abides in the sphere of infinite space."*

Just as if a person were looking at a piece of cloth, blue, yellow, red, or white in color, fixed to a carriage door or around a frame, and the cloth were removed, he or she would be looking at the space, so disciples who were first looking at the *kasiṇa* device remain looking at the space as if the *kasiṇa* device were suddenly removed through their dwelling upon "space, space". The mental process of this *samāpatti* is illustrated in the table on the following page.

The explanation of this process is the same as that given above. Here, "Infinite Space" indicates the continuity of that *samāpatti* during the period in which disciples determine to remain.

Table 2: Entering into Infinite Space (ākāsānañcāyatana)

Kamma	Preliminary		Rising	*Kamma*
BH	VI CP MD PR AC AN CL	Infinite Space	Rising	BH BH BH
aep	aep aep aep aep aep aep aep	aep aep aep aep aep aep aep	…	aep aep aep

Key: BH = *Bhavanga*
VI = Its vibration
CP = Change of process
MD = Mind door cognition
PR = Preliminary (*parikamma*) moment
AC = Access (*upacāra*) moment
AN = Adaptation (*anuloma*) moment
CL = Change of lineage (*gotrabhū*) moment

a = The arising moment
e = The existing moment
p = The passing moment

The Attainment of Infinite Consciousness

Disciples who have mastered the attainment of the sphere of infinite space, see that this attainment is still under the shadow of the *rūpajjhāna*, which is to be regarded as the near enemy, and, therefore, they wish to attain the state of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*), considering it to be even more tranquil. They proceed with the practice, thinking of the infinite space as "consciousness, consciousness". With the repetition of this reflection, the mind leaves the object of infinite space and assumes its own consciousness as the mental object. The entering into the ecstasy of this consciousness is called "*viññāṇañcāyatana-samāpatti*", "the attainment of the sphere of infinite consciousness", which is summarized as follows:

> *"... passing entirely beyond the sphere of infinite space, thinking of infinite consciousness, he enters into and abides in the sphere of infinite consciousness."*

The process of this *samāpatti* and those of the remaining two are the same as shown in the above table, the only difference being the particular attainment.

The Attainment of the Sphere of Nothingness

This attainment is preceded by thinking: "there is nothing, there is nothing"; "there is emptiness, there is emptiness"; "there is seclusion, there is seclusion". Thus thinking of the absence, emptiness, and seclusion of the sphere of infinite consciousness, disciples enter into the ecstasy in which the mind has no object of any kind, and the ecstasy is suspended upon the idea of nothingness. Just as a place occupied by a crowd appears empty when the crowd has left, so can this state of nothingness be realized. The consciousness formerly occupied by infinite space appears empty when the object has left

it. Likewise, disciples in this *samāpatti* abide seeing "nothingness", for, "passing entirely beyond the sphere of infinite consciousness, thinking 'there is nothing', they enter into the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*)."

The Attainment of the Sphere of Neither Perception nor Non-perception

In the attainment of the sphere of nothingness, the bliss of its tranquility is felt as a perception. As long as the perception is prevalent, there is still a subtle residue of partiality with regard to this bliss. Seeing that this is still an imperfection, disciples wish to attain the highest stage of formless (*arūpa*) attainment. Therefore, they neutralize this perception, as it were, counterbalancing this partiality, or rendering it ineffective. They proceed, thinking of the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception (*nevasaññā-n'āsaññāyatana*) as "calm, calm". As they repeat it, the mind attains to the ecstasy of supreme calmness in the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception. (The meaning of these terms is explained in Chapter 24.) This is the last and highest state of peace that can be attained through the practice of *samādhi* meditation in the state of conditioned existence. In this state, there remains a subtle residue of feeling (*vedanā*) and perception (*saññā*) from the five aggregates (*khandha*) and the highest state of pure consciousness, called "*arūpa-kusala*", which still belongs to the aggregate of compounds (*saṁkhāra*). Hence, it is called (*Vibhanga* 283) "*saṁkhāra-avasesa-samāpatti*", "the attainment of the residue of *saṁkhāra*".

In relation to the *jhāna* state, all these formless attainments are parallel to the fourth *jhāna*, in that they possess two factors: equanimity (*upekkhā*) and concentration (*samādhi*). Those who have not practiced *kasiṇas* and those who are not skilled in the *jhāna* exercises (*vasitā*) are not able to experience these attainments (*samāpatti*). But, these attainments come as natural results, together with Arahatship, to those who have accomplished these practices in past lives.

Phala-Samāpatti, or the Attainment of the Fruit

Those who have attained the four Noble Paths (*ariya-magga*) in their lifetime enjoy the four fruits thereof, which are actually called "*sāmañña-phala*", "the fruits of the *samaṇa* life", and which can only be attained by treading the path of the *Buddha*. This enjoyment, called "*phala-samāpatti*", "the attainment of the fruit", is the entering into the ecstasy in the object of *nibbāna* and remaining in it for a considerable period. Here, each of the noble individuals (*ariya-puggala*: Stream-Winner [*Sotāpanna*], Once-Returner [*Sakadāgāmi*], Non-Returner [*Anāgāmi*], and *Arahat*) attains to this ecstasy with his own fruit (*phala*), but those in the higher stages do not enter upon the lower, because, when they have reached the higher stages, the lower have subsided. Thus, *phala-samāpatti* differs from *jhāna-samāpatti* in that those who have attained all of the stages in *jhāna-samāpatti* may pass from a lower to a higher and from a higher to a lower.

Phala-samāpatti is entered upon in two ways: (1) by ceasing to think of any object other than *nibbāna* and (2) by reflecting upon *nibbāna* itself. Hence, it is written (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 296):

> *"Friends, there are two conditions for the attainment of the signless (animitta) deliverance of the mind (ceto-vimutti): non-attention to all signs (nimitta) and attention to the signless element. These are the two conditions for the attainment of the signless deliverance of mind (animitta-ceto-vimutti)."*

Here, the *phala-samāpatti*, "the attainment of the fruit", is termed "*animitta-ceto-vimutti*", "the signless deliverance of the mind". According to the Commentaries, *ceto-vimutti* refers to the concentration associated with the noble fruit (*phala-samādhi*), while *animitta* refers to *nibbāna*, which is devoid of all phenomenal relations, or signs (*nimitta*) — the signs of the five aggregates (*khandha*).

Disciples who wish to enter upon *phala-samāpatti* should withdraw to a secluded place and contemplate composite phenomena (*saṁkhāra*), their rise and fall, and so on, as explained in connection with *vipassanā* meditation (see Chapter 27). As the series of insight knowledges arise in them one after the other, their mind becomes fixed on ecstasy by attaining the fruit immediately after the knowledge of adoption (change of lineage) (*gotrabhū*). *Gotrabhū* knowledge in *phala-samāpatti* is to be understood as adaptation (*anuloma*) knowledge, for it is stated (*Ṭīkāpaṭṭhāna* II, 159):

> *"The adaptation knowledge of an Arahat renders service to the attainment of the fruit by way of immediate cause (anantara paccaya). The adaptation knowledge of noble learners (sekha) also renders service to the attainment of fruit by way of immediate cause."*

Having entered into the *samāpatti*, disciples remain there for the duration of the period previously determined. There are three causes which prolong *samāpatti*: (1) non-attention to phenomenal objects; (2) continuous attention to *nibbāna*; and (3) the previous preparation (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 297). Of these, previous preparation is the time decided upon prior to the attainment. The mental process of this *phala-samāpatti* is illustrated in the following table:

Table 3: Entering into Phala-Samāpatti

	Saṁkhāra Object	*Nibbāna* Object	
		Phala-Samāpatti	
Kamma	Preliminary	1 2 …………………………………	
BH VI	CP MD AN AN AN AN	FR FR FR FR FR FR FR FR FR	Rising BH
aep aep	aep aep aep aep aep aep	aep aep aep aep aep aep aep aep aep	aep aep

In this mental process of *phala-samāpatti*, four adaptation (*anuloma*) moments (AN) usually arise with a *saṁkhāra* object, and, after the fourth, two moments of fruition (FR) occur, having *nibbāna* for their object (indicated by 1 and 2). Then, the mind, being absorbed by the *nibbāna* object, continues in *phala-samāpatti* (as shown by the dotted line) until the expiration of the predefined period, if it is not interrupted. At the moment of rising, the mind sinks into the *bhavanga* (BH), and then the mind comes to the ordinary state, depending on any phenomenal object. The position of the mind in this process is parallel to its corresponding *jhāna*, that is to say, if the Noble One has attained the path in the state of the first *jhāna*, the fruit is that of the first *jhāna*. It is the *lokuttara* (supramundane) state, since it has *nibbāna* for its object. If the path is attained in the state of the second or any other *jhāna*, then the fruit is of that particular *jhāna*. The physical state of those who are in the *phala-samāpatti* is the same as that in the *jhāna-samāpatti*. It should be noted that the Noble Path and the attainment of the fruit never arise in the state of *arūpa-samāpatti*, because, in the *arūpa* state, the physical base of the mind (*hadaya-vatthu*) is either inactive or does not exist at all. Hence, the formless, or immaterial absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*), are always mundane (*lokiya*), and the existence in their corresponding spheres, or realms, is regarded as unworthy, or unprofitable. But, the practice and attainment of the formless, or immaterial, absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*) are extra achievements of *samādhi* meditation, and, to those who have been trained in the *vipassanā* method, they are not impediments, but special advantages for the perfection of knowledge.

Disciples who have entered into *phala-samāpatti* remain therein, experiencing the happiness of *nibbāna* as the visible result of their practice. At the time of emergence from it, any of the five aggregates (*khandha*), or the signs (*nimitta*) of phenomena, being the objects of subconsciousness, rouse them at the end of the time allotted prior to their attainment, or else, when they cease to reflect upon *nibbāna*, any of those objects naturally come to their mind and break the process of attainment. Thus, the emergence from the attainment of the fruit takes place in these two ways, as stated in the following (*Majjhima Nikāya* I, 296):

> *"Friends, there are two conditions for emergence from the signless deliverance of mind: attention to all signs and non-attention to the signless element. These are the two conditions for emergence from the signless deliverance of mind."*

Nirodha Samāpatti

Non-Returners (*Anāgāmi*) and *Arahats*, who have achieved all of the previous *rūpajjhāna* and *arūpajjhāna* stages, may enter a further state, which is called "*saññā-vedayita-nirodha*", "the cessation (*nirodha*) of feeling (*vedayita*[184]) and perception

[184] *Vedayita* means "that which is felt or experienced". It is synonymous with *vedanā* "feeling, sensation".

(*saññā*)", or "*diṭṭha-dhamma-nibbāna*",[185] "*nibbāna* in the present life", if they are not satisfied with the mere visualization of *nibbāna* in the attainment of the fruit (*phala-samāpatti*).

The Monk who wishes to pass into this *nibbāna* ecstasy, after taking his meal and cleansing his body, should sit down in a secluded spot. He begins by entering the first form, or fine material, absorption (*rūpajjhāna*). Emerging from it, he reflects on the three characteristic marks (*anicca*, *dukkha*, *anattā*) of the compound phenomena (*saṁkhāra*) experienced in the first *jhāna*, by means of the nine insight knowledges (explained in Chapter 27).

Then, he enters into the second *jhāna* and emerges therefrom. In the same way, he reflects on the compound phenomena experienced therein. Thus, he proceeds up to the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*). Emerging therefrom, he performs the preliminaries, namely, (1) wishing that no damage should befall his physical requisites, that is, such things as dwelling place, etc., shared by others of the monastic community, (2) determining to answer, if the *Sangha* sends for him, (3) determining to answer, if the Teacher (the *Buddha*) sends for him, and (4) considering his life-term.

The Monk should be particularly skillful in the last of these. He should reflect on whether his life-term will last a week, for, should he pass into the *samāpatti* without considering this, the *samāpatti* cannot prevent death. Since death does not take place during the *samāpatti*, he would emerge from the attainment before the expiration of the predefined time of seven days. Therefore, he should consider this before his attainment.

Thus, he enters into the sphere of nothingness and, emerging therefrom, fulfills these preliminary duties. After this, he enters into the fourth formless, or immaterial, absorption (*arūpajjhāna*), the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception (*neva-saññā-n'āsaññāyatana*), in a stage of transition to the attainment of sustained cessation (*nirodha*) and in contact with *nibbāna*, which is the total suspension of mind, mental properties, and mental qualities associated with mind. The process of this attainment is illustrated in the following table:

Table 4: Entering into Nirodha

Sphere of Nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*)		*Nibbāna*
VI CP MD AC AN CL JH JH	*Nirodha*	FR BH BH
aep aep aep aep aep aep aep aep		aep aep aep

Immediately after the preliminary functions described above, the third *arūpa* consciousness (the sphere of nothingness [*ākiñcaññāyatana*]) forms the process of the attainment of *nirodha*, "cessation", setting up the usual vibration (VI) of *bhavanga* (BH), which is then arrested by the mind door (MD) cognition, followed by the usual

[185] This should not be mistaken for the "*diṭṭha-dhamma-nibbāna*" mentioned in the Brahmajāla Sutta (The Net of Brahmā) (*Dīgha Nikāya*, no. 1), which means sensual gratification in the present life and is a heretical view denying rebirth.

transitional moments, access (AC), adaptation (AN), and change of lineage, or adoption (CL). In this stage, the operative moral consciousness of the fourth *arūpa jhāna* (JH) in the case of an *Anāgāmi*, and the inoperative (*kiriyā*) consciousness of the same in the case of an *Arahat*, accompanied by equanimity and insight, occurs for two moments. Then, all the activities of mind subside into *nirodha*, as indicated by the empty box between the sphere of nothingness and *nibbāna*, and, in this manner, the cessation (*nirodha*) endures for seven days, during which time the life-force, or the subtle heat of the physical body, is supported solely by the power of *kamma*. The difference between one who is in *nirodha samāpatti* and one who is dead is discussed in the Cūḷavedalla Sutta (The Shorter Series of Questions and Answers) (*Majjhima Nikāya*, no. 44; I, 296), where it is stated:

> *"In the corpse, not only have the pliable forces of the body (kāya-saṁkhāra, that is, breathing), speech (vacī-saṁkhāra, that is, the faculties of vitakka and vicāra), and the mind ceased, but also vital heat (usmā) is extinguished, and the sense faculties are broken. But, in one who has entered into nirodha, the heat exists, and the faculties are clear, although respiration, speech, feeling, and perception are stilled and quiescent."*

On rising from this ecstasy, the consciousness moment of the fruit (FR) of the respective paths invariably occurs for one moment, with *nibbāna* as its object,[186] and then the flow of the *bhavanga* (BH) stream resumes.

Immediately after, there follows one consciousness moment of the reflective (*paccavekkhaṇa*) process, after which the mind resumes its normal activities. It is in this way that the successful meditator enjoys the happiness of *nibbāna* in the present life. Hence, the saying (*Visuddhimagga* 709):

> *"This, too, is an attainment which*
> *A Noble One may cultivate;*
> *The peace it gives is reckoned as*
> *Nibbāna here and now.*
> *A wise man, developing*
> *The noble understanding, can*
> *Endow himself with it.*
> *Therefore, the ability to pass into*
> *This state is said to be a good result*
> *Of understanding in the Noble Paths."*

Thus, the Non-Returners (*Anāgāmi*) and the *Arahats* who have attained their paths through the practice of the eight absorptions (*jhāna*) possess the ability to enter into *nibbāna* in their lifetime and to remain there for seven days in the manner just described.

[186] As stated in the *Majjhima Nikāya* (I, 302): "Friend Visakhā, the mind of the Monk who is rising from the attainment of cessation of perception and feeling is disposed towards inner seclusion (*viveka*, *nibbāna*), bent on, inclined towards inner seclusion."

But, those who are not experienced in the *jhāna* practice (that is, *sukkha-vipassakas*[187]) do not possess this power. They realize *nibbāna* immediately after the attainment of each stage of the Noble Path and are able to remain for an indefinite period visualizing *nibbāna* in the attainment of the fruit (*phala-samāpatti*) in their lifetime.

This *nibbāna* of personal experience is the destruction, extinction, elimination of mental defilements (*kilesa-parinibbāna*), which produces the freedom, or purity, of a mind developed in full knowledge. There being four stages of *phala-samāpatti*, the Noble Ones experience their own freedom (*nibbāna*) during the period that they remain in the state of ecstasy induced by the reflection on that freedom. That is to say, those who have won the fruit (*phala*) of the first path (Stream-Winner [*Sotāpanna*]) experience the absolute freedom from three fetters (*saṁyojana*): (1) personality belief — the delusion of selfhood; (2) skeptical doubt; and (3) attachment to rites and rituals. Those who have won the fruit of the second path (Once-Returner [*Sakadāgāmi*]) experience the freedom of the weakening of two additional fetters: (4) desire for gratification of the senses and (5) ill will. In like manner, those who have won the fruit of the third path (Non-Returner [*Anāgāmi*]) experience the freedom of the absolute cessation, destruction, elimination of these two fetters. Finally, those who have won the fruit of the fourth path (*Arahat*) experience the absolute freedom from all taints (*āsava*) as well as from the five remaining fetters: (6) craving for fine material existence; (7) craving for immaterial existence; (8) conceit; (9) restlessness; and (10) ignorance. Thus, *kilesa-parinibbāna* is experienced in these four stages. But, that which is experienced in the *nirodha-samāpatti* is the state of *nibbāna*, namely, the cessation of all mental activities, which is comparable to that of final *nibbāna*. Final *nibbāna* is called "*khandha-parinibbāna*", "the complete cessation of the five aggregates", and is attained by *Arahats* upon their death. It is in connection with this *nibbāna* that a distinction is made in the works on the subject between two types of *nibbāna*: (1) *sopādisesa nibbāna* and (2) *anupādisesa nibbāna*. Actually, these are not two separate kinds, but one single *nibbāna*, which is given one of two names according to the explanation of the way in which it is experienced, whether during one's lifetime or attained to after death.

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[187] *Sukkha-vipassaka*, "one supported by bare insight", is the term used in the Commentaries for those who, without having attained any of the meditative absorptions (*jhāna*), have realized, only through the support of insight (*vipassanā*), one or several of the supramundane paths (*ariya-magga*) (*Sotāpanna*, *Sakadāgāmi*, *Anāgāmi*, *Arahat*). In the *Visuddhimagga* (XVIII), they are called "*suddha-vipassanā-yānika*", "one who has pure insight (*suddha-vipassanā*) as the vehicle (*yānika*)", as distinguished from "*samatha-yānika*", "one who has tranquility (calm-abiding) (*samatha*) as the vehicle (*yānika*)". Though the primary meaning of *sukkha*, as intended here, is as stated above, the Sub-Commentaries also employ the literal meaning of *sukkha*, that is, "dry": "His insight is dry, rough, unmoistened by the moisture of tranquility meditation (*samatha bhāvanā*)." This justifies a frequent rendering of this term by "dry-visioned" or "having dry insight", which, however, should not lead to misconceptions about the nature of insight meditation as being "dry" or "merely intellectual", when, in fact, the development of insight (*vipassanā*) will produce rapture (*pīti*) and a sense of urgency (*saṁvega*) in the meditator. Cf. Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines* (4th revised edition; Kandy, Śri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society [1980]), pp. 204—205.

The *nibbāna* which is realized and eliminates the defilements (*kilesa*) but retains a trace of *upādi*[188] (that is, the five aggregates of clinging [*khandha*] which still constitute an individual) is *sopādisesa* (*sa-upādi-sesa*), "with the aggregates remaining", while that which is attained with the cessation of the last thought, that is, at the dissolution (death) of the body, without any residue of *upādi*, is *anupādisesa* (*an-upādi-sesa*), "without the aggregates remaining", and is equivalent to *parinibbāna*, the complete extinction of the aggregates (*khandha*). The mental process of *parinibbāna*, or the final death of an *Arahat*, takes place as shown in the following table:

Table 5: Entering into Final Nibbāna

Kamma object	*Saṁkhāra* object		
BH VI CP	MD JA JA JA JA JA	Death moment	
aep aep aep	aep aep aep aep aep aep	aep	*Parinibbāna*

In general, this represents the mental process of a dying *Arahat*. Here, after the mind door cognition (MD), there occur five *javana* moments (JA) with the object of compound phenomena (*saṁkhāra*) "seen as they really are". These *javana* moments, being inoperative consciousness (*kiriyā-citta*), produce no future result (*vipāka*). The death moment occurs immediately after the fifth *javana*, cutting off the continuance of cyclic existence (*saṁsāra*). This is "*parinibbāna*", or the state of *nibbāna* without any residue of *upādi* (*anupādisesa nibbāna-dhātu*), where there is no more cause for rebirth (*paṭisandhi*). If the *Arahat* is proficient in the absorptions (*jhāna*), his final death may occur (1) after *jhāna-samāpatti*, (2) after retrospective (*paccavekkhaṇa*) *javana* moments, (3) after the moment of *abhiññā*, or, finally, (4) after the retrospection following the attainment of the fruit of Arahatship (cf. *Compendium of Philosophy*,[189] p. 75).

Such is the end of the attainment derived from the development of full knowledge through meditation. ■

[188] Literally, "something which one grasps, something to which one clings".

[189] Translation of the *Abhidhammattha Sangaha* by U Shwe Zan Aung, revised by Caroline A. F. Rhys Davids, Pāḷi Text Society, 1910.

35

Nibbāna

"Meditating[190] *earnestly and striving for nibbāna, the wise attain the highest joy and freedom."*[191]

Dhammapada, verse 23

All that has been said about the Buddhist system of meditation (*bhāvanā*) in the foregoing chapters of this book is summarized in this verse from the *Dhammapada*, which conveys the central idea of the whole system. The doctrine embodied in this system of meditation insists that the only ideal worth striving for is the ideal of self-enlightenment that leads to *nibbāna*, the final deliverance. Deliverance comes not from belief in others or through supposed supernatural agencies,[192] but through insight gained entirely by one's own efforts.

All must be awake, strenuous, and ardent in their practice. The meditative life of a recluse is no more effective than the worldly life of the ordinary person (*puthujjana*) unless it is devoted, here and now, to the attainment of enlightenment (*bodhi*). The culmination of enlightenment through self-effort will prove its reality in the attainment of Arahatship, in which disciples realize *nibbāna* within themselves. As long as one remains connected with the body, one experiences the kind of nibbānic happiness known as "*sopādisesa*", "with the aggregates (*khandha*) remaining", explained in the previous chapter. With the final dissolution of the bodily elements (*dhātu*), one attains to the state of *nibbāna* without any substratum of elements (*anupādisesa-nibbāna-dhātu*), where the operation of the four elements (earth, water, heat, air) comes to an end. There, the currents of passions, the whirling pool of *saṁsāra*, the compound of mind and body cease once and for all. To quote the scriptures (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* I, 15):

"Where water, earth, fire, and air
Do not gain a footing;
It is from here that the streams turn back,
Here that the round [of rebirths] no longer revolves;

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[190] In this verse, meditation means both calm abiding (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*).
[191] *Nibbāna*.
[192] Buddhism utterly rejects the concept of a Creator God — a "first cause" or a "causeless cause" — as being "impossible".

Here, name and form[193] *cease,*
Leaving no trace."

Nibbāna being the ultimate goal of Buddhist meditation, it is necessary to give here a brief account of its doctrinal character and religious significance, as expounded in the Pāḷi scriptures.

Etymology

The translators have typically preferred the Sanskrit term "*nirvāṇa*" to the Pāḷi term "*nibbāna*", just as they have used "*karma*" for "*kamma*". Both *nirvāṇa* and *karma* have now been incorporated into European languages and can be found in dictionaries which acknowledge and attempt to explain their application in Buddhist teachings.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *nirvāṇa* as "extinction of individuality and absorption into the supreme spirit as the Buddhist highest good". Obviously, this does not represent the Buddhist view. Here, the Vedantic conception of *nirvāṇa* is confused with the Buddhist. Buddhism never speaks about absorption into a supreme spirit (the *paramātman*). Buddhism does not acknowledge individuality apart from the combination of mental and material aggregates (*khandha*) wherein ordinary people (*puthujjana*) entertain the notion of individuality through selfish craving (*taṇhā*).

The Pāḷi word "*nibbāna*" is composed of "*ni-*" and "*vāna*". "*Ni-*" is a negative prefix meaning "absence of", while "*vāna*" is a metaphorical expression for "craving" or "lusting". Thus, "*nibbāna*" means "absence of craving".

The Commentaries define *nibbāna* in this way (*Visuddhimagga* 293; *Compendium of Philosophy* 168): "It is called '*nibbāna*' in that it is a going away (*nikkhanta*) from that craving which is called '*vāna*', 'lusting', in the sense that it (*vāna*) operates as if it were a thread, or cord, to connect one life with another."

The metaphorical expression referred to above comprises "*taṇhākkhaya*", "the destruction of craving, or thirst", one of the epithets given in the text. In this sense, *nibbāna* is to be understood as the absence of craving.

The meaning "extinction", which is most generally given to *nibbāna*, is derived from the Pāḷi verb *nibbāti*, "to blow out". Regarded in this sense, the word is composed of *ni(r)-* and *vā-*, "to blow (as wind)", or "to go out", as the flame of a candle or a fire. This, again, is a metaphor, used to express the state of final *nibbāna* that results from the destruction of craving.

The extinction has also been explained as a "blowing out" of the fires of greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), and it applies to the attainment of *nibbāna* in

[193] *Nāma-rūpa*, "mind and body", "mentality and corporeality". In five-group existence (*pañca-vokāra-bhava*), mind and body are inseparable and interdependent. The impersonality and dependent nature of mind and corporeality are explained in the doctrine of dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*). Five-group existence is the name for existence in the sensory realm (*kāmāvacara*) or in the fine material realm (*rūpāvacara*), since all five aggregates of existence (*khandha*) are found there.

this present lifetime, that is, the blowing out of the threefold fire from the heart (*hadaya*), where it formerly burned.

"The world is in flames", said the *Buddha* (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* I, 31). According to the Commentary, it is enflamed with the fires of greed, hatred, and delusion; also of birth, decay and death, pain, lamentation, sorrow, grief and despair. When this fire is blown out, *nibbāna*, the coolness, is attained.

The Negative Aspects

Here, it may appear that the idea of *nibbāna* cherished by Buddhists is chiefly a negative one. But, the fact is that Buddhists, especially disciples of meditation, are trained from the very beginning to see things as they really are, not as they may appear to be. They know that every existence, even that in the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception (*nevasaññā-n'āsaññāyatana*), is a cause of suffering (*dukkha*), because every existence is conditioned and subject to the law of impermanence (*anicca*). They know, however, that there is also an escape, an end to ever-recurring birth and death. There is an end to the arising of states of consciousness that are everywhere always restless and dissatisfied. There is a *nibbāna*, a deliverance from impermanence. Seeing this as the only goal worth striving for, they become joyous optimists. With this optimistic outlook, they come to spurn the trivial and unstable joys of life in the transient world and strive to fulfill the most innate need of the heart — peace and satisfaction. Thus, starting from a negative view concerning worldly happiness — which appears positive to those who are still deluded by its fleeting shadows —, they come to the true positive, the most hopeful security, the happiness of *nibbāna*. Thus, this *nibbāna* is misconstrued as a negative concept only by those who have not been able to understand it, not by those who have understood it.

There are other expressions whereby a critic, at first sight, may find grounds for assuming that *nibbāna* is mere annihilation, an idea which never occurs to a Buddhist who understands the doctrine as taught by the *Buddha* (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* IV, 251):

"Nibbāna, nibbāna, friend Sāriputta, thus they say. But, what, friend, is this nibbāna?" was the question asked by the wandering ascetic Jambukhādaka. Venerable Sāriputta replied: "Nibbāna is the extinction of greed, hatred, and delusion."

But, it must not be thought that *nibbāna* is nothing more than the mere extinction of these mental states. From the doctrinal point of view, the statement implies that these lower tendencies of the mind must be destroyed by cultivating the opposite qualities, that is, by moral and intellectual development with *nibbāna*, "freedom", as the result. Hence, Venerable Sāriputta's reply refers to the path by which the attainment of *nibbāna* is possible. Referring to this, Buddhaghosa Thera says that one must not say that *nibbāna* is mere extinction, because, then, Arahatship also becomes merely extinction (*Visuddhi-magga* 508): "Nor should it be said," he comments, "that there is no *nibbāna* merely

because the ignorant and average person does not find it. Again, it should not be said that there is no *nibbāna*, for should there be no *nibbāna*, the path composed of the threefold training would be futile. But, it is not futile, because it does lead to the attainment of *nibbāna*."

These statements regarding the negative definitions of *nibbāna* show that it is not merely an absence, but, rather, something to be achieved as the ultimate good through the destruction of the evil qualities of mankind and by the development of one's moral and intellectual qualities.

The Positive Aspects

Many terms with positive connotations are used to describe the positive state of *nibbāna*, such as:

mokkha	deliverance from pain and sorrow
nirodha	liberation from the imprisonment of *saṁsāra*
santa	peace
sacca	unchanging truth
siva	the state of bliss
amata	the deathless state
dhuva	the state of permanence
saraṇa	the refuge from suffering
parāyana (*parāyaṇa*)	final destiny
ananta	the state that has no end
khema	the state free from fear
kevala	the absolute; the *summum bonum*
pada	the state of support
paṇīta	the supreme state
accuta	the state free from decay
mutti	release; liberation
vimutti	emancipation
santi	tranquility
visuddhi	purity
nibbuti	the state of coolness; etc.

Metaphorically, *nibbāna* is spoken of as "*pāra*", "the other shore", "*tāṇa*", the place of protection", "*lena*", "the shelter", "*dīpa*", "the island", etc.

As stated in the *Sutta Nipāta* (verses 1093—1095):

> *"Kappa," said the Blessed One, "For the sake of those stuck in the middle of the river of being (saṁsāra), overwhelmed by death and decay, I will tell you where to find solid ground.*

"There is an island, an island which you cannot go beyond. It is a place without faults, a place of non-possession and of non-attachment. It is the total end of death and decay, and this is why I call it 'nibbāna' ['the extinguished', 'the cool'].

"There are those who, in mindfulness, have realized this and are completely cooled here and now. They do not become slaves working for Māra, the Evil One — they cannot fall under his power."

All these terms affirm that *nibbāna* is something positive that can be realized in one's own heart and that it is the object which must be achieved by each person for himself or herself, and not merely a subject for speculative thought.

Doctrine

In its doctrinal aspect, *nibbāna* is the only real destiny awaiting humanity, for it is the only escape from conditioned existence. That which is conditioned is phenomenal. That which is phenomenal can be perceived, defined, and measured. It is subject to the limitations of time and space. That which is limited by time and space is necessarily transient and subject to the law of change. That which is subject to the sovereignty of the law of change is not happy or secure from danger, because it is impermanent. The ultimate objective of mankind is not to achieve what is impermanent, but that which is everlasting. That which is everlasting must be beyond all conditions and limitations — it is absolute. Hence, *nibbāna* is indefinable and immeasurable. It cannot be expressed in terms of logic, because it is beyond all the propositions with which language can cope. It passes beyond all that can be expressed in words and must be attained or, rather, become. It may be understood through language only so far as it is possible to form a conception of it, and, while the conception may be arguable, that which lies beyond it is positive and beyond all argument (*atakkāvacara*). Although it is such, it is as real as the existence of space. The existence of space is real,[194] although it cannot be perceived except as the absence of objects, and it is not possible to measure or define it. In the reality outside of conditioned existence, both *nibbāna* and space are alike. But space is empty, while *nibbāna* is full — full of happiness, for it is the escape from unhappiness; full of good, for it is attained by the elimination of evil.

Concerning the doctrinal character of *nibbāna*, the *Buddha* says (*Udāna*, 80):

"Monks, there is a state where there is neither earth, nor water, nor heat, nor air; neither infinity of space nor infinity of consciousness, nor nothingness, nor perception, nor non-perception, nor this world, nor that world. That, Monks, I call neither coming, nor going, nor standing; neither death nor birth. It is

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[194] In the theory of relativity, space and time are joined in a "space-time continuum", a four-dimensional continuum with four coordinates, the three dimensions of space and that of time, in which any event can be located.

> *without establishment, without procession, without a basis; that is the end of sorrow (nibbāna)."*
>
> *"Hard it is to realize the Absolute.*
> *The truth is not easily perceived.*
> *Desire is surpassed by those who know it;*
> *To those who see it, all things are naught."*

In the same discourse just quoted, the *Buddha* also says:

> *"There is, Monks, the unborn, unoriginated, unmade, and unconditioned. Were there not the unborn, unoriginated, unmade, and unconditioned, there could be no escape from the born, originated, made, and conditioned. Since there is the unborn, unoriginted, unmade, and unconditioned, there is escape from the born, originated, made, and conditioned."*

Giving a rational meaning to the above, He says:

> *"Where there is dependence (the law of causality), there is change. Where there is no dependence, there is no change. Where there is no change, there is quietude (satisfaction). Where there is quietude, there is no desire. Where there is no desire, there is no coming and going (activities of kamma). Where there is no coming and going, there is no birth and death. Where there is no birth and death, there is neither this world, nor that world, nor both — that is the end of sorrow (nibbāna)."*

As a Mental State

From a psychological perspective, *nibbāna* is a mental state, and is classified as such under *nāma*, and an object of cognition, since it belongs to the objects of thought (*dhamma-ārammaṇa*). Consequently, it is a "*vatthu-dhamma*", "a state conceivable in consciousness". Here, it should be understood that liberation from craving (*taṇhā*), or the extinction of the threefold fire (greed, hatred, delusion), is really conceived in the mind only when the mind is actually released from them and when disciples themselves realize that they are released. Hence, *nibbāna* is the consciousness itself, liberated from all worldly objects and thoughts; the consciousness that has no sign (*nimitta*) perceptible to the senses, that is immeasurable, pure and free from all taints (*āsava*); where all connections with the elements (*dhātu*) cease, leaving no trace (*Dīgha Nikāya* I, 223). This is the state of *nibbāna* seen by the knowledge of the path, that is, the *nibbāna* known as "*sopādisesa*", "with the aggregates remaining". In other words, it is the "*vimutta-citta*", "the mind (of an *Arahat*) emancipated from the taints (*āsava*)".

This emancipation is attained by the development of insight into the Noble Paths in one's own heart, as it were; that is, putting it into the heart (*nibbānaṁ hadaye opiya*) (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* I, 199). At the death of such an emancipated individual, consciousness is extinguished, like the flame of a candle.

As a Happy State

As a happy state, unsullied by worldly feelings, it transcends all the ordinary joys of life. Eloquent testimony of the deep joy and thrilling hope that *nibbāna* brings occurs very frequently in the scriptures.[195] Such fervid and enthusiastic expressions of feeling, uttered with solemnity in introspective verses by those who have seen *nibbāna* in their own lifetime, illustrate the positive state of *nibbāna* in a manner beyond all reproach. It may be said that the strength and significance of such feelings are exaggerated, because they are drawn from mystical experience and religious exaltation. But, there is actually nothing mystical about such personal experience — it is the result of following a system of spiritual training with full conviction, experiencing from beginning to end its efficacy in leading to the objective goal, the happiness of emancipation which is the central ideal of the whole system. It has been written (*Vinaya* II, IX, I, 4; *Udāna* 56):

> *"As the vast ocean, O Monks, is impregnated with one taste, the taste of salt, so also, Monks, in the doctrine that I teach, there is but one taste, the taste of deliverance."*

It was in order to lead His fellow beings to this deliverance, to the happiness of *nibbāna*, that the *Buddha* taught the true doctrine (*Dhamma*), expounding the method of threefold training (*sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*). It is in order to reach *nibbāna* that His followers, men and women, forsake the worldly life and devote themselves to the practice of a contemplative life, which has but one taste, the taste of deliverance.

As a Limitless State Attainable by Self-Realization

"But where does this *nibbāna* exist?" was the question raised by King Milinda. Venerable Nagasena gave the following reply (*Milindapañha* 327—328):

> *"There is no place looking East, South, West, or North, above, below, or beyond, where nibbāna is to be found, and yet nibbāna exists, and he who orders his life rightly, grounded in virtue and, with rational attention, may realize it, whether he lives in Greece, China, Alexandria, or Kosala.*

[195] Especially the *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā*.

"Just as fire is not stored up in any particular place but arises when the necessary conditions exist, so nibbāna is said not to exist in a particular place, but it is attained when the necessary conditions are fulfilled."

When a similar question was asked by the celestial being Rohitassa, the *Buddha* replied (*Saṁyutta Nikāya* I, 62):

"In this very fathom-long body, along with its perceptions and thoughts, do I proclaim the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the path leading to the cessation of the world."

Accordingly, it follows that *nibbāna* is not a kind of heavenly existence where a transcendental soul resides, but a state attained within oneself. Buddhism teaches that *nibbāna* is attained by a process of mental training in which the mind is released by stages from the fetters (*saṁyojana*) that hinder its development of complete insight.

In the first stage, disciples achieve moral purity (*sīla-visuddhi*), purging their mind of unwholesome words and deeds. As a result, they gain unimpaired happiness and inward serenity. They then purify their mind of the lower tendencies, the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) that impede the growth of full knowledge (*paññā*). When their mind is free from sensuous passion and attachment to the world, free from malice, sloth and torpor, distraction and agitation, and perplexity, they are like a person absolved from debt, or recovered from sickness, or released from prison, or an emancipated slave, or a person who has come to the right path after going astray.

When disciples have overcome these five hindrances, they begin to train their mind in concentration (*samādhi*). In the course of development, they attain the different stages of absorption (*jhāna*). With the gradual removal of unwholesome mental factors, they determine to develop insight (*vipassanā*). Discerning the three characteristics of phenomenal existence, impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*), they develop full knowledge through the practice of insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*) in order to eradicate the roots of evil, the tendencies towards: (1) attachment, or greed (*lobha*); (2) hatred, ill-will, aversion, or hostility (*dosa*); and (3) delusion (*moha*). In the gradual elimination of the ten fetters rooted in these three tendencies, they attain the stages of the Noble Path (*ariya-magga*) leading to *nibbāna*.

In the first stage of the path (Stream-Winner [*Sotāpanna*]), they eliminate the first three fetters: (1) personality belief — the delusion of selfhood; (2) skeptical doubt; and (3) attachment to rites and rituals. At the attainment of the fruit (*phala*) of this path, they perceive in their mind the first deliverance and see *nibbāna* as one sees a form in a dim light. It is in this stage that disciples are fully convinced of the reality of *nibbāna* and the efficacy of the path shown by the *Buddha*. Then, weakening the last two of the lower fetters — (4) desire for gratification of the senses and (5) ill will —, they attain the second path (Once-Returner [*Sakadāgāmi*]), the fruit of which makes them free from the causes of lower existence. There, they see *nibbāna* as one sees a form by a torch-light. Completely eliminating the residue of these two lower fetters of desire for gratification of

the senses and ill-will, they attain the third path (Non-Returner [*Anāgāmi*]), the fruit of which raises them entirely from existence in the lower plane. Here, they see *nibbāna* as one sees a form in a place flooded with light. Then, they eliminate the five remaining fetters — (6) craving for fine material existence; (7) craving for immaterial existence; (8) conceit; (9) restlessness; and (10) ignorance — and so attain the fourth path (*Arahat*), the fruit of which makes them one with *nibbāna*, freed from all fetters (*saṁyojana*) and taints (*āsava*), released (*vimutta*), cooled down (*nibbuta*[196]), and, at death, blown out like the flame of a candle, no longer grasping at any form of existence (*anupādā parinibbāti*).

This is the actual experience of release obtained by the practice of meditation, and it is this release that constitutes the everlasting, never-fluctuating happiness which is the ultimate goal — *nibbāna*.

> *"Where water, earth, heat, and air find no footing, there, starlight*[197] *does not glow, nor does the sun shine, nor does the moon shed its radiant beams — but yet, the home of darkness is not there.*
>
> *"When, in the deep and silent hours of [meditative] thought, the holy sage (the true brāhmaṇa) attains Truth, then, he is fully released from joy and pain; he is freed from [both] form and the formless."* (*Udāna* 1, 10.)

> *"How sweet the peaceful solitude of those who have both learned and then perceived the Truth. Happy to be free from hate, kind*[198] *to all! Happy to be free from passion and desire, as well as self-delusion — that is supreme joy!"* (*Udāna* 2, 1.) ■

[196] Here, *nibbuta* means "cooled, quenched, (fig.) desireless, appeased, at peace, pleased, happy".
[197] *Sukkā*, "the lighting stars".
[198] *Saṁyama*, literally, "restraining from harm".

Appendix
The Arahat[199]

90. They have completed their journey;[200] they are freed from sorrow[201] and from all else.[202] The bonds[203] of life have fallen from them, and the fever (of passions) no longer exists in them.[204]

91. The thoughtful strive diligently.[205] They take no delight in homelife,[206] but forsake home after home,[207] as swans leave the lake.

92. *Arahats* accumulate nothing.[208] When taking food, they reflect over it with full understanding of its nature.[209] Their sole goal is liberation,[210] which is void and signless.[211] Like the flight of birds in the sky, their path cannot be traced.[212]

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[199] An *Arahat*, literally, "worthy one", is one who has destroyed all passions such as greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and ignorance (*avijjā*). After the death of their physical bodies, *Arahats* are not reborn but attain *parinibbāna*.

[200] Here, "journey" means the round of rebirths (*saṁsāra*).

[201] One becomes freed from sorrow on attaining the third stage of holiness, Non-Returner (*Anāgāmi*), one who is not born again in this world.

[202] They are freed in regard to all phenomena (*dhamma*), such as the five aggregates (*khandha*) and the like.

[203] There are four kinds of bonds or ties (*ganthas*): (1) covetousness (*abhijjhā*); (2) ill will (*vyāpāda*); (3) indulgence in wrongful rites and ceremonies (*sīlabbataparāmāsa*); and (4) adherence to one's dogma or dogmatic fanaticism (*idaṁ saccabhinivesa*). "These things are called 'bonds,' since they bind this mental and material body" (*Visuddhimagga* XXII, 54).

[204] This verse refers to the ethical state of an *Arahat*. Heat is both physical and mental. *Arahats* experience bodily heat as long as they are alive, but they are not worried by it. They do not, however, experience the mental heat (fever) of passions.

[205] In calm abiding (*samatha*) and insight meditation (*vipassanā*).

[206] That is, the life of sense pleasures.

[207] *Arahats* wander wherever they like without attachment to any particular place, inasmuch as they are free from the concept of "I" and "mine". The meaning here is that they have relinquished all attachments.

[208] There are two kinds of accumulation: (1) accumulation of *kamma* and (2) accumulation of possessions. One's wholesome and unwholesome deeds amount to accumulation of *kamma*. A *Bhikkhu's* four requisites constitute accumulation of possessions. In this regard, a *Bhikkhu* dwelling in a monastery, keeping one lump of sugar, four portions only of clarified butter (ghee), and one measure (*nāḷi*) of uncooked rice is not accumulation of possessions, but keeping more than that is.

[209] In accordance with the three *pariññās*. *Pariññā* means "full comprehension, full understanding". The three *pariññās* are: (1) full understanding of the known; (2) full understanding of investigating; and (3) full understanding as overcoming.

[210] *Nibbāna*.

[211] It is called "void" because it is free from greed, hatred, and ignorance. It is called "signless" because it is free from the signs of greed, hatred, and ignorance. *Arahats* experience the bliss of *nibbāna* while alive.

[212] Just as the track of birds that fly through the sky is hard to trace, is impossible to know, because they leave no visible sign or mark (such as a footprint) that one can see, similarly, those in whom the twofold accumulation is not found, who understand food by the three forms of understanding, whose goal is liberation, in their case too, the path by which they have departed is hard to trace; it cannot be followed, due to lack of indications.

93. *Arahats* are free from cankers;[213] they are not attached to food. Their sole goal is liberation, which is void and signless. Like the flight of birds in the sky, their path cannot be traced.

94. Even the gods cherish such steadfast ones,[214] whose sense faculties are calm, like horses well-trained by charioteers, and who are free from pride and cankers.

95. Like the earth, *Arahats* are patient and cannot be provoked to respond in anger. They stand firm and steady, like a column.[215] They are serene[216] and pure, like a lake without mud.[217] They are free from the cycle of birth and death.

96. Wisdom has stilled their minds, and their thoughts, words, and deeds are filled with peace. Truly knowing the *Dhamma*, they are free from moral defilements and are unperturbed by the ups and downs of life.

97. Those who are not credulous,[218] who have realized the unconditioned,[219] who have cut off the links of the round of rebirths, who have destroyed all consequences of good and bad deeds, who have discarded all craving, are indeed the noblest of all.[220]

98. They make holy wherever they dwell, in a village or a forest, in a valley or on a hill.

99. With their senses at peace and their minds full of joy, they take delight in secluded forests,[221] where worldlings are loath to go.[222] ■

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[213] *Āsavas* (literally, "influxes") "cankers, taints, corruptions, intoxicants, biases".
[214] Even the gods (celestial beings) — and also human beings — eagerly long for the sight and arrival of ones such as these, who are steadfast in self-control and freedom.
[215] *Indakhīla* "Indra's column". The commentators mention that *indakhīlas* were firm posts, stakes, or columns which were erected either inside or outside a city as an embellishment. Usually, they were made of bricks or durable wood in octangular shapes. Half of the column was embedded in the ground, hence the metaphor "as firm and steady as an *indakhīla*". Another possible translation is "threshold".
[216] That is, they have neither attachment to desirable objects nor aversion to undesirable objects. Nor do they cling to anything. Amidst the eight worldly conditions, they remain unperturbed, manifesting neither attachment nor aversion, neither elation nor depression. The eight worldly conditions are: (1) gain (*lābha*) and (2) loss (*alābha*); (3) fame (*yasa*) and (4) infamy, or ill-repute (*ayasa*); (5) praise (*paraṁsā*) and (6) blame (*nindā*); and (7) happiness (*sukha*) and (8) pain (*dukkha*).
[217] The lake water, being free from mud, is unpolluted; *Arahats*, being free from defilements, are also unpolluted ("serene and pure").
[218] Inasmuch as they have understood and experienced the Truth for themselves, they do not take things upon faith from the words of others. They do not believe things which they know are not true.
[219] *Nibbāna*.
[220] *Arahats*.
[221] They do not seek sense pleasures. Hence, *Arahats* prefer secluded forests, far from the allure of sense objects.
[222] These inspiring verses are taken from the *Dhammapada*, Chapter 7, *Arahantavagga*.

Buddhist meditation has been one of the most important factors in shaping Asian religious life during the past two thousand six hundred years. Meditation is an integral part of Buddhist religious doctrine and practice, because it is directed entirely and exclusively to mental purification and liberation.

This book has been acknowledged by contemporary Buddhist scholars as the first time that a work of this kind has been attempted since ancient scholar-monks produced the Commentaries on the Pāḷi Canon of Theravādin Buddhism. Its author has brought together nearly all of the important textual sources from the Pāḷi Buddhist scriptures that have come down to us, arranged them systematically under appropriate headings, and provided a connecting text which correlates, explains, and annotates them.

The author, Venerable Paravahera Vajirañāṇa Mahāthera, obtained a Doctorate in Philosophy from Cambridge University for this work. He was an indefatigable worker in promoting Buddhism, having expounded the teachings of the *Buddha* in Europe, the United States, and his native Śri Lanka.

In preparing the Charleston Buddhist Fellowship edition of this manual, the original has been thoroughly reworked. New material has been incorporated from various sources, including the *Visuddhimagga* (Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli's translation), the translations from the scriptures given in the original have been compared against more modern translations and have been changed accordingly, the English has been reworded where necessary to improve clarity, new footnotes have been added, and Pāḷi terms have been reviewed and corrected where required. Thus, the current edition is virtually a new work.

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